

# The Nation and The Athenæum

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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

IT is now evident that Sir Austen Chamberlain has got himself into a wretched mess over the proposed enlargement of the League Council, and that the mess will entail serious complications for the world at large. The Quai d'Orsay, which had hitherto been fairly reticent upon the matter, has launched this week a counter-offensive to the agitation in the British Press, and asserts roundly that Sir Austen Chamberlain has committed himself to support the Polish claim. Meanwhile Sir Austen Chamberlain is arguing the case for "suitable additions" to the Council with such uneasy assiduity as to detract seriously from the value of our own Foreign Office assurances that our hands are free. How far did Sir Austen Chamberlain really go in Paris? The House of Commons and the British public have a right to know. But the most serious feature of the French outburst of this week is that it suggests that the French Government has decided not to allow the Polish claim to drop. Sir Austen Chamberlain's repeated assurance that the project is quite uninfluenced by the motive of securing a counterpoise against Germany becomes entirely ridiculous in face of the current French indignation. There is talk of Poland resigning from the League if she is denied a permanent seat, and seeking for protection against the German menace in the arms of Russia. Presumably it is thought that this prospect will terrify our Cabinet. But what is really serious is that there is now no chance that the entry of Germany into the League will be the cordial ceremony of reconciliation which it ought to be. On the contrary, almost any hitch is possible. Her admission to the Council may be vetoed despite the assurances given, and the whole work of Locarno may be thrown into the melting-pot.

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It is now clear, indeed, that the immediate dangers of the situation are far graver than we thought when we wrote the leading article which appears on another page. Our Ministers persist in refusing to declare their attitude, arguing that it would be highly improper to do so in advance of the Council meeting, a transparent sophistry in view of the fact that Sir Austen has not thought it improper to enter into a preliminary understanding with M. Briand. At the same time, they urge,

in a tentative and general form, arguments in favour of the Polish claim so flimsy that it is an insult to the public intelligence to put them forward. Sir Austen tells us that he is concerned only to strengthen "the moral authority" of the Council by "suitable additions." If this were really the object in view, there could be no less "suitable addition" than Poland, who has such a doubtful reputation for League loyalty that the Assembly has persistently refused to elect her as a temporary member. Commander Hilton Young is about the only man in this country who has ventured to defend the Polish claim upon its merits, and his argument reduces it to absurdity. Poland, he says, wants help which only the League can give.

"At present Poland will not beg for help, because it is suspicious of the League. If those suspicions could be removed, Poland, no doubt, would accept that help, very much to the advantage of her own stability and to the peace of Europe. I refer in particular to help in the organization of her finances."

In other words, the fact that Poland is incapable of managing her finances without League control is an argument for giving her the status of a Great Power and a privileged position in the League's high executive!

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The Report of the Food Council on Short Weight and Measure in the Sale of Foodstuffs (Cmd. 2591) is a clear, firm document. The Council, after hearing sixty-seven witnesses, and examining a large amount of documentary evidence, has reached the conclusion that legislation is necessary to check the widespread tendency of retail traders to give short weight and measure. Except as regards coal, bread, and tea, there is no existing law for the specific purpose of preventing this form of fraud. The Weights and Measures Act, 1878, provides for the punishment of persons wilfully committing fraud in the using of any weight, measure, or weighing instrument, but prosecutions under this Act can only be successful in cases where an Inspector actually sees the weighing or measuring taking place. The Merchandise Marks Act, 1887, makes it an offence to apply a false trade description, including false measure or weight, to goods sold, but this only operates where the vendor gives an invoice with the goods. The Council therefore recommends that the giving of short weight

or measure should be made a statutory offence; that certain specified foodstuffs, such as bacon, meat, butter, margarine, cheese, flour, sugar, coffee, and potatoes, should be retailed exclusively by net weight; that the Board of Trade should be given power to add other articles to the list; that fresh milk should be retailed only by imperial measure; and that the Act embodying these provisions should be administered by the Local Authorities which enforce the Weights and Measures Acts.

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The Food Council's Report has been very well received. The publicity which has been given to the evidence of glaring, exceptional cases of short weight no doubt prepared both the traders and the public for a drastic report, and only a few extreme individualists, like Sir Ernest Benn, have come forward to support the protests of the Federation of Grocers' Associations. Legislation on the lines proposed is promised soon after Easter, and, if one judged solely by the tone of the Press, an easy passage through Parliament might be predicted. In practice, however, legislation of this kind always proves controversial, and the lines upon which opposition will arise in the present instance can be gathered from the *Times* leader approving the Report. Replying to the argument that the giving of short weight is already a punishable offence, the *Times* says that "the results of the inquiry have shown that the law, if it has the power, is singularly ineffective in carrying it into operation, and needs to be strengthened." When, however, the same critic urges that the duties entrusted to local authorities should not be extended so as to lead to the increase of "the already huge army of officials, and thus add to local taxation," the *Times* cordially agrees, and declares that "that is a condition indispensable to the acceptance of the change by the country. It will be the business of Parliament to see that it is carried out." The Board of Trade is expected, apparently, to devise legislation which will be effective in protecting the consumer without involving any administrative expense; a difficult task.

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Conservative newspapers are much aggrieved by the inadequacy of the official report of the Council meeting of the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations which took place in London last Tuesday. "In view of the recent decision to broaden the basis of the Council so as to make it fully representative of all sections of Conservative workers," says the *Times*, "Members of Parliament were urging that, in future, the official report of its meetings should consist of a fair account of the business transacted at them." It is not quite clear to the outside observer whether the basis of the Council has as yet been broadened, but there appears to have been no broadening of the outlook of its members. We can well understand the desire of the official reporters to draw a decent veil over its proceedings on Tuesday, for, apart from the orgy of revolt against the Civil Service sports grant, which has been fully advertised and seems to have intimidated the Government, there was a curious episode in connection with that hardy annual the Political Levy Bill. A resolution was, it seems, submitted urging the reintroduction of Mr. Macquisten's famous Bill.

"To this," says the *Times*, "a drastic amendment was moved which, while supporting the principle of that Bill demanded that steps should be taken to render all political action by trade unions illegal. At least four members of Parliament and a number of wage-earning members of the Council desired to speak against both the resolution and the amendment, but had no chance of doing so before the amendment was declared to have been carried."

Lady Warwick's handsome gift of Easton Lodge to the Trade Unions enables the Congress to realize its old ambition, which became a definite purpose after the war, of setting up a centre of adult education for working people. The description "Trade Union University," which has been applied to the enterprise, is rather misleading. The curriculum is unsettled, but there is no intention of giving "academic" education. What is intended is to give competent teaching in economic and industrial history, and generally to equip for trade union and political life men and women who are called to big responsibilities with small equipment in the craft of affairs. It has always been taken for granted that the two existing Labour Colleges, Ruskin College at Oxford and the Labour College in London, would be merged in the new institution. But colleges, like humbler organisms, have a habit of fighting for their separate existence, and both the colleges are reluctant to give up their individuality, and to renounce Oxford and London for the rural solitude of Essex. A further difficulty is that while Ruskin College stands for a broad and generous type of education, the Labour College is definitely Marxist in doctrine. There is no means of compulsion, though as both colleges are more or less supported by the trade unions there will be means of persuasion. Whether the other colleges join or not, it is understood that the Easton Lodge College will come into existence, and that the training of Labour men and women on the international side will be an important part of its work.

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Trade union organization in the shipbuilding industry at the present time must give ample food for thought to the theorists of working-class organization, as well as to those directly concerned. The recent agreement between the Employers' Federation and the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Federation has drawn attention to the complexity, if it is not more correctly termed chaos, of the present state of affairs on the trade union side. The new agreement provides improved conciliation machinery for dealing with all matters other than wages. It has been the subject of interminable negotiations, but has now been accepted by a four to one majority. Yet the boilermakers, the shipwrights and joiners, the electricians, and the plumbers and painters—in fact, all the "key" tradesmen—are not members of the Engineering and Shipbuilding Trades Federation, and are not therefore parties to the new agreement. So long as this inter-union rivalry continues, trade union organization in the industry cannot be regarded as satisfactory from any point of view, and least of all in the eyes of the trade union movement as a whole. We are often told that craft-unionism is dying a natural death, and that within a few years the transition to industrial unionism will be triumphantly completed. This may be true of certain industries, but in shipbuilding the supremacy of craft-unionism is still unchallenged, and even agreements as to common action, let alone formal federation, are still in the distant future. A really thoughtful exposition of his creed by a craft-unionist in the shipbuilding industry would be a most interesting document.

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The debate on the Iraq Treaty added little to the arguments on either side of the controversy. Perhaps the most important feature of the debate was Mr. Chamberlain's emphatic repudiation of commercial motives for accepting the extended mandate, and the revelation that Turkey had offered, both to the present Government and to their predecessors, an extensive oil monopoly in return for the surrender of the Mosul vilayet. Its worst feature

was the reckless abuse of Turkey indulged in by Mr. Hilton Young, which is not exactly calculated to assist the conversations now in progress with Angora. On the main issue, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald does not appear to us to have faced squarely the position created by the strongly expressed belief of the League Commissioners that an extension of the mandate would be in the best interests of the populations concerned, and while we regret the extension of our responsibilities, we do not see how the Government could have declined it. It is provided by the Treaty that the situation shall be reviewed every four years, and that as soon as possible, Iraq shall become a member of the League of Nations and the Treaty shall thereupon lapse. This provision will enable Great Britain's disinterestedness to be tested; and it is obvious that, if its present mood is maintained, this country will gladly terminate the mandate at the earliest possible moment.

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The position in Egypt should be very carefully watched during the next few weeks. Ziwar Pasha, the British nominee, now finds himself unable to continue the unconstitutional rule into which he was forced after the last crisis. He is compelled to hold a general election, and what is more, to drop the electoral law which his Government endeavoured to put into force; the coming elections are to be held on the basis of universal suffrage. The issue is, therefore, clear. If Ziwar Pasha, who has, admittedly, administered the country well, has really made himself respected by the Egyptian people, he may get a majority at the polls. If he does, a friend of Great Britain will be governing constitutionally in Egypt, and British policy in that country will no longer suffer from the taint of its violent, arbitrary initiation. If he fails, what is the alternative? Simply that Zaghlul will return to power, with the same programme of unflinching hostility towards Great Britain which caused the last crisis. The experiment of governing through unconstitutional nominees will be ended in circumstances which will make any attempt at repeating it impossible. Meanwhile, Ziwar Pasha's prospects will certainly not be improved by any suggestion of external pressure, and Lord Lloyd, the present High Commissioner, has fortunately shown every desire to assist Egypt in the return to constitutionalism.

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A grave warning as to the dangers of a policy of drift in China has been uttered by Dr. Sze, the Chinese Minister to the United States, who declared that, unless a satisfactory solution of the problems of the tariff and extra-territoriality was produced by the Conferences now sitting, public opinion in China might be expected to demand the denunciation of the existing treaties. Both the urgency and the difficulty of the problems are emphasized by recent events. While the Conferences are sitting, the Canton boycott continues, and it is reported in Peking that the British Minister has lodged a protest with the Chinese Government; but since Peking has, in fact, no control over Canton, the protest, if lodged, must be regarded as merely formal. Meanwhile, the Strike Committee at Canton, apparently with the connivance of the Canton Government, has instituted its own separate Customs Service, and has sent armed pickets to remove cargo from the custody of the Imperial Customs authorities. The Commissioner of Maritime Customs has replied by closing the port of Canton and Whampoa until the goods are returned, with the object of safeguarding the revenues.

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The Commissioner's action will, no doubt, be represented as an illustration of the effects of foreign control of the Chinese Custom Service; but the Canton boycott

has inflicted immense loss and suffering on the Chinese themselves, and the action of the strikers is directed as much against the interests of the Central Government as against those of foreign traders and bondholders. It is easy to sympathize with Dr. Sze's plea for a speedy readjustment of the treaties; but what we believe is paralyzing the action of the Conferences is the general belief that, under existing conditions, a revision of the tariff and the abolition of extra-territoriality would make the position of foreign residents in China, and of foreign trade with China, practically impossible, without enabling a stable Central Government to be established, or relieving the mass of the Chinese people from the burden of civil war and brigandage. We have already stated our reasons for believing that a much more drastic reform of the financial system and administration than is contemplated by the Tariff Conference is an essential preliminary to rendering the Central Government stable and effective, and that the solution of this problem must proceed simultaneously with the readjustment of China's relations with the Powers. We have suggested that the good offices of the League of Nations, acting, of course, in co-operation with the United States, should be sought for this purpose. We remain of that opinion; but whatever be the ultimate solution, one thing is clear: the present policy of drift must lead to a continuous deterioration of the position, ending, possibly, in catastrophe, and it is high time that a serious effort should be made to go to the roots of the problem.

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Amid the apprehensions which are so commonly expressed as to the drift of British society, with the habit of thrift (so it is alleged) disappearing along with the rest of the puritan virtues, it is reassuring to learn of the remarkable progress of the Abbey Road Building Society, which has very nearly doubled its share capital and the volume of its business during the past two years. The Annual General Meetings of this Society seem likely to become a public institution now that Sir Josiah Stamp has become its President, and not only delivers an address but has succeeded in establishing the convention that a Cabinet Minister should deliver one too. The progress of this particular Society reflects (though in an exceptional degree) a general growth of the Building Society movement; and on Monday last Sir Josiah Stamp and Sir Arthur Steel-Maitland dwelt on the social significance of this phenomenon. On the one hand, it is evidence of, and provides an outlet for, an increasing volume of saving by individuals of small means; this is clearly a satisfactory development; Sir Josiah Stamp argued, indeed, that it is an indispensable condition of our continued social progress, now that the highly taxed rich do not save so much. On the other hand, it marks the rapid extension of ownership of houses by their occupiers, in place of the landlord-tenant system. What will be the effect of this development, if it continues, on the mobility of labour? Both Sir Josiah Stamp and the Minister of Labour found this question difficult to answer.

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At the annual meeting of the Chamber of Shipping great disappointment was expressed at the failure of foreign Governments to introduce legislation giving effect to the Brussels Convention, embodying the revised Hague Rules for the Carriage of Goods at Sea. Rather bitter reference was made to other conventions which, after being signed by representatives of the leading maritime nations, as the result of previous agreement between shipowners and merchants of all countries, had been similarly rendered non-effective. In respect of the Brussels Convention, the Government have promised to use their best endeavours to procure its general application, and it is sincerely to be hoped that these efforts will be successful.

### THE COUNCIL EPISODE

"That this Committee views with grave apprehension the proposal that a special meeting of the League of Nations Assembly, convened for the single purpose of electing Germany to membership of the League and to a permanent seat on the Council, in accordance with the understandings reached at Locarno, should be made the occasion for further fundamental changes in the constitution of the Council. The Committee is of opinion that there are grave objections to any further enlargement of the Council, and urges His Majesty's Government to offer a strenuous opposition to any such changes at the present time."

**T**HE unanimous adoption last Monday of the above resolution by the League of Nations Parliamentary Committee is an event of the very first importance. The Committee comprises 370 members of the House of Commons (as well as some fifty peers) drawn from every party, with the Conservatives largely preponderating, as they do in the House itself. This signal declaration of Parliamentary opinion, following upon the expressions of opinion in the Press which have been hardly less unanimous, should settle the question of the enlargement of the Council, so far as Britain is concerned. The Cabinet can hardly allow Sir Austen Chamberlain to lend British support to a project which has been repudiated with such emphasis by a body representing an overwhelming majority of the House of Commons. But the persistence of the Foreign Secretary in controverting publicly the arguments against this unfortunate project shows how very necessary this assertion of Parliamentary opinion was. Sir Austen tells us that he is unpledged, an assurance we can thankfully accept; but manifestly he has gone so far in benevolence towards the claims of Spain and Poland that the idea of now drawing back makes him exceedingly uncomfortable. In these circumstances, as we urged a fortnight ago, it was vital that the powerful pro-League opinion in this country should declare itself; and it has done so with promptitude and vigour. In truth, a very remarkable thing has happened. For the first time, opinion, Parliamentary and public, has asserted itself as a spontaneous, effective, and, as we trust, a decisive force in the control of foreign policy. The old aim of the U.D.C., which had seemed almost to have faded into the obscurity of forgotten causes, bids fair to be realized, in the most quiet and unsensational of manners, on an issue of the first moment.

With Sweden officially, and Britain unofficially, resolute in opposition, the proposal to admit Spain and Poland at this juncture to permanent seats on the Council is no longer practical politics; and it is unnecessary to argue the merits of the question any further. But there is still a danger that the affair may lead to trouble of another sort; and a few reflections upon the episode are in place. The first of these relates to Sir Austen Chamberlain. He has bungled the matter very badly, and has supplied the Quai d'Orsay with something of a grievance. The French would never have gone forward with the project, as they have done, but for the blessing which he bestowed on it during his recent stay in Paris. To drop it now will be equivalent, they argue, to a public humiliation, to the least appearance of which the mentality of the Quai d'Orsay is notoriously hypersensitive. Sir Austen, they feel, has let them down. The matter would never have been raised in the Paris Press, there would have been no rebuff, and no ill-feeling at all, if he had made it clear that British opinion would not support the proposal, or even had refrained from implying that it would.

What led our Foreign Secretary to give his personal countenance to the proposal? The answer, we believe,

is to be found in a distorted perspective arising from the belated discovery by traditional diplomatists of the efficiency of the League machine. Until quite recently, the League was treated by the Chancelleries of Europe with polite disdain. It might be a useful instrument for dealing with minor vexatious matters remote from the main issues of European politics; at any rate, if it were kept to these minor matters it need not do much positive harm. Of course, when anything happened that mattered, it must be dealt with by ordinary dispatches, supplemented perhaps by a meeting of the Council of Ambassadors; and meanwhile, the foolish enthusiasts who looked to the League to inaugurate a new world order could be allowed to blow off steam. Lord Cecil could do what he liked at Geneva, provided foreign policy was left in the hands of Lord Curzon and the high officials of the Foreign Office. We can all remember the prevalence of this attitude; and it had the advantage that the League, just because it was left so largely to the despised enthusiasts, was able to develop traditions and a spirit of its own, before it was enveloped by the traditions and the spirit of the old diplomacy.

Now in the last year or two, the high diplomatists, both in Britain and in France, have become "converted" to the League in a very remarkable degree. They have found that it is a very practical institution, and, instead of ignoring it, they are tending to use it more and more as the clearing-house of world affairs. This, in itself, is a highly welcome fact, but it carries certain dangers with it. For the diplomatists, in their new-found zeal for the League, have not shed all their old traditions, some of which are the reverse of helpful in League affairs. The typical diplomatist is, first and foremost, an opportunist. He lives from hand to mouth. He moves in an atmosphere in which a *quid pro quo* is expected for any favour and in which the humouring of susceptibilities is the first consideration. The notion that the fundamental principle of the Council's composition is a matter of importance in itself is not one which comes naturally to him. This seems to be the explanation of Sir Austen Chamberlain's attitude. He has been very favourably impressed with the efficiency of the present Council, and he thinks in terms of the personalities who now compose it. He welcomed the idea of a permanent seat for Spain, because M. Quiñones is an excellent colleague. M. Quiñones, moreover, was very helpful, as was the Brazilian representative, in the matter of Mosul. As for Poland, questions which concern her vitally will be very much to the forefront in the next few years; and then Sir Austen Chamberlain was anxious to oblige M. Briand, who had been so very accommodating at Locarno. The notion that the constitution of the Council raises a large issue of principle, which cannot be suitably determined by such considerations of immediate convenience, does not seem to have occurred to him at all.

We lay stress on this aspect of the matter, namely, the impolicy of altering and marring the permanent structure of the League in the interests of momentary pleasantness. For it is here that danger still lies ahead. German opinion naturally resents, as a violation of the Locarno understanding, the proposal that the Council should be manipulated to her detriment before Germany is admitted to it, and it is amazing that this aspect of the matter too should have escaped our Foreign Secretary. But Germany, as yet, cares nothing for the League, while she cares very much about certain other things; and it might suit her book to do a "deal." France, on her side, has a motive for a "deal" in her desire, mentioned above, to avoid the appearance of an open humiliation. "Soundings" have already taken

place as to whether Germany would agree to the enlargement of the Council in return for concessions, perhaps over the Rhineland occupation, perhaps over Danzig and the "corridor." The *Times* published on Tuesday an extract from the Hamburg CORRESPONDENT, which purported to indicate the attitude of the German Government, and which, after stating that the enlargement of the Council would be contrary to the agreement at Locarno, proceeded as follows:—

"These matters, however, are in the ordinary course not settled according to mere principles but are governed by the material question of mutual exchange and political negotiation. For example, it would be worth our while to consider whether our future assent or refusal in the matter of the adoption of another Power into the Council might not be made to depend upon our obtaining concessions in other European problems which are important to us, as, for instance, in the Rhineland question."

Now all this breathes a spirit which is prejudicial to the League, and it serves to remind us that Germany will inevitably be animated by this spirit for a considerable time. We cannot expect her to become a "good" League member immediately upon her admission; we must expect her to be primarily concerned with her own grievances and not above using her powers as a member of the Council as a bargaining counter to better her position. There will be more need, therefore, in the near future than ever before to vindicate the impartiality of the League, and to preserve principles essential to its stability and development against the self-regarding ambitions of one set of States supported by the interested *complaisance* of another. Never was it more important that the weight of Britain should be cast on the side of those disinterested elements, like Sweden, which can be trusted to be loyal to the League idea. For Britain, with few axes of her own to grind, ought, above all other States, to be the good League member, standing up always for its larger interests, and holding aloof from hole-in-the-corner bargains. This is the rôle which represents the true development in the modern age of our old tradition of "splendid isolation," and it is the rôle which, judging from the manifestations of the last three weeks, commends itself to the British people.

### WEEK-END THOUGHTS ON THE LAND CONFERENCE

BY A GALLERYITE.

**I**T is galling to find Liberal headquarters organization experts needing a lesson in the folly of trying to keep the Press out of proceedings of public significance. The people who arranged the Land Conference certainly got their lesson. The result of endeavouring to bar out reporters was to diminish the amount of space given by the papers to things that mattered at the Conference, to put news editors on their mettle for incidents, and to provoke breaches of confidence.

There was not a single speech at the Conference which could not have been reported. There is a legitimate public concern in the preparation of any party's Land Policy, and the discussions in Kingsway Hall were illuminating. To imagine that a large Conference, sitting for three days, could debate in secret, was flying in the face of experience. As to incidents, when the deplorable affair of the Major and the K.C. occurred, the news was in the clubs and the evening papers in an hour.

The Conference dispelled a belief that has sometimes been expressed that the Liberal Party is short of agricul-

tural experts. It is a pity that more of them were not on the Land Committee. All sorts of speakers at the Conference showed technical knowledge of a valuable kind. In the large audience there were evidently scores of men and women well worth listening to on the complexities of the rural situation. The appeal of the Land Campaign must be mainly to the labourers, for there are more labourers than farmers; but the outstanding feature of the Land Conference was the considerable number of Liberal farmers assembled there.

There were many labourers present, but Mr. Lloyd George was not the only member of the Conference who regretted that there were not more of them. And some of the labourers in attendance were men who were more smallholders than labourers, or were technically ex-labourers, or had other means of livelihood than the land.

No doubt Mr. Lloyd George's plan for calling together a national conference of labourers only has a great deal to recommend it. But the getting up and the conduct of such a conference will bring Mr. Lloyd George and his friends face to face with the problem of what their relation is going to be to the men's Unions. No doubt the two Unions do not cover more than a proportion of the agricultural population. But, in view of the enormous difficulties of organization, due to distances and the difficulty which agricultural workers, by reason of their low cash income, experience in paying subscriptions, it is easy to underrate the importance of the Unions. If Mr. Lloyd George or anyone else were to start an organization, based on collecting subscriptions from agricultural labourers, and on organizing them into branches, he would learn a thing or two. Even in Scotland, where the level of education and of wages is higher, the leakage from Unionism largely counteracts the increase in membership.

In any Liberal propaganda among the labourers the sympathy of advanced Liberals cannot be expected if there is any lack of generosity or seeming lack of generosity towards the principle of agricultural Trade Unionism. If Liberalism is not for Trade Unionism it is a backward sort of Liberalism. The members of every calling have nowadays, be they doctors, teachers or master plumbers, their Unions. With the farmers organized in one of the strongest Trade Unions in the kingdom, it is behind the times to suggest that Trade Unionism is not vital to the agricultural worker. That agricultural-labourer Trade Unionists may not always throw up wise or well-instructed leaders is only to say that they suffer from the drawbacks of their circumstances. If any class in the country is deserving of sympathy, encouragement, and a generous judgment in their efforts towards combination, it is the agricultural worker.

There is yet another point. The agricultural worker is in a bad way. In many districts he is justified in emigrating or going on the railway or into the police. His housing conditions are often abominable. There can be no question that some Liberals who are willing to take a party advantage of what seems like being an advantageous rural campaign might have done more for the labourer than they have done. They have given their minds sometimes to far afield questions of various sorts when it would have been more creditable to them to have heard the plaint of the ill-used of their own county. Even at the Land Conference a sharp ear could detect in the tones of some non-labourer speakers a preoccupation with the interests of the well-organized farmer and only a mild objection to the present situation as it affects the labourer. Every sane student of rural England wants fair treatment for the farmer, in other

words, just conditions for our agricultural industry, but it is the sad case of the labourer bottom dog which must trouble the thinking observer most.

Things being as bad as they are, the situation is not going to be improved in a hurry. It is going to be a stiff job. And there is not so much help that any can be wasted. People who keenly feel the bitterness and indefensibleness of the present situation, and have been sickened by a long course of party manœuvring, for which men of all shades of opinion have been responsible, are anxious not to stand in the way of any honest workers for rural progress. Some of the keenest workers at the present moment are men and women who, if they have not actually joined the Labour Party, have been brought, by an experience for which the Liberal Party is mainly responsible, to a position of great sympathy with Labour effort. A Liberal Land Campaign which, in its speechifying or in its tracts, shows itself petty, carping, and partyish in its references to those who choose to call themselves Socialists, stultifies itself from the start. There seem to be Liberals who have forgotten that it was a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer many, many years ago who declared that we were all Socialists now.

As a countryman it seems to me that the tendency to draw fine distinctions between the Liberal proposals and land nationalization of an intelligent sort is rather silly. There are far too many Liberals who seem to be scared of names. We have had too much about names. We have to get down to realities. Some of the Land Campaigners seem to think country people are waiting to welcome them. The truth is that a large proportion of the working agricultural population is at about the end of its patience with politicians. The Labour people make their appeal to many country workers because the Labour people are wage-earners like themselves.

It is honest to set down in conclusion the impression that useful and stimulating though the Conference was in many ways, it was a bit middle-aged, not to say elderly. In several rows that I counted, the delegates were overwhelmingly grey-headed or bald-headed. There were a few young men and women at the Conference, but it was not their gathering. And if things are going to be changed in the countryside it is the younger generation which is going to do it. Not a little of the speaking from the platform was platitudinous and boresome. There was no fire in it.

### AT. ST. STEPHEN'S OPPOSITIONS IN CHAOS

(BY OUR PARLIAMENTARY CORRESPONDENT.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

FEBRUARY 23RD, 1926.

**N**O more one-sided debate has been recently held in the House of Commons than the discussion concerning the ratification of the Iraq Treaty. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was hopelessly handicapped by the fact that this Treaty arose inevitably out of the actions of his own Government two years ago, and that the repudiation of it would mean a fatal blow to the League of Nations. In fact, it was doubtful if he would have spoken at all in criticism, but for the grotesque and hopeless system which the Labour Party has now adopted in Parliament, which must result in inevitable decay. They have decided that their Executive Committee—a kind of Soviet—shall settle the policy which the party shall adopt, and that their leader shall be compelled to take that line whether he believes it desirable or no. The pacifists who have been elected on that Executive Com-

mittee have swarmed over into the front bench; and the Glasgow Socialists who elected Mr. MacDonald as Leader of the party are now entirely alienated from him. He presents a dismal resemblance to the picture, which Mr. Bonar Law once unfolded to the House, of a man following a troupe of ruffians in the French Revolution, who, being asked what he was doing, explained that "I am their leader." It was quite evident that in the awkward, incoherent, and confused utterance of this leader, he was endeavouring to carry out the policy of this Soviet against his own political ideas. It was deplorable also to see how the remains of the Liberal Party had departed from the great legend of Gladstone, and, like Commander Kenworthy, explained that the Turks were a beneficent population of the East, or, like others, that economy at home demanded that we should not carry out the Treaty, but acquiesce in the massacre of the Eastern Christians. A few Labour Members, including the astonishing Mr. Purcell, talked about oil in Mosul, and appeared to have oil both on and in their brains. Sir Austen Chamberlain swept the whole oil problem aside by his intimation of the fact that both he and the Labour Government which he succeeded had been offered by the Turks all the oil of Mosul (which has not yet been proved to exist in payable quantities), if we would tear up the League of Nations award and give this, the most vital of the three provinces, to the unspeakable rule of the young Turk. The young Turk is no different from the old Turk, as many of us who have been studying Eastern questions have found, and it is quite obvious that the Turks demand Mosul, not on the principle of self-determination, or because Turks inhabit Mosul—for the overwhelming number of the population are either Christians or Kurds or Arabs—but because from Mosul they wish to advance, when opportunity offers, to conquer Bagdad, and from Bagdad to Basra, and thus to re-establish the old imperial control which turned Mesopotamia from a garden into a wilderness.

It is, of course, difficult for Liberals to make up their minds to vote with Mr. Amery, with his harsh, raucous voice, his pedagogic lecturing, his undignified appearance, his enormously lengthy speeches read from typewritten manuscript, and his childish "imperialism," which are calculated to turn every Member into the other lobby. But nine or ten Conservatives of the younger generation, who have actually been at Mosul, including Mr. Jack Hills, most popular of Tory social reformers, were able to turn the current of opinion excited by the natural dislike of the foolish rhetoric of the Colonial Secretary into the facing of realities. It was an extraordinary change to find these younger Conservatives pleading for the award of the League of Nations, as not only preventing a rebuff to that body but also as ensuring the safety and welfare of the Eastern Christians in Iraq, against a certain section of Labour and Liberalism who merely shouted for a mean economy, and, at the price of dishonour, were prepared to repudiate the League of Nations award which the Turks had agreed to in the Treaty of Lausanne, and to praise a race which lives on slavery and slaughter. Mr. Duff Cooper once more increased his reputation, as did Colonel Eden, who again asserted that he had been attacked for being pro-Turk. Mr. Thurtle obtained the attention of a scanty House by his obvious sincerity, and Mr. Hilton Young, in the swan-song of his departure from the Liberal Party, delivered, with intimate knowledge of the actual conditions in these remote regions, one of the best dying orations ever heard in Parliament. But immediately it was shown that we should be flouting the award of the League of Nations, leaving the Christians to the atrocities which have been described by the Estonian General (quite impartial as between Britain and Turkey), and opening the way for Turkish imperialism to descend the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, it was quite evident that, despite the squealing of big Tory newspapers, the House of Commons would in fact ratify the Treaty.

If Thursday showed Liberalism at its worst, Friday exhibited it at its best. Mr. Greaves Lord introduced a measure encouraging judges to impose heavier sentences, founded upon the *obiter dicta* of the Lord Chief Justice, in connection with the Hayley Morris case. And, of course, the Hayley Morris case, with all its loathsome details, inflamed the popular mind to approve of increased sentences for such crimes, and made the proposal difficult to criticize or oppose. Mr. Harney rose to the occasion with great courage. The private member's bill, as introduced, provided that substantial extra sentences should be permitted to the judges, not only in this type of case, but in all cases. Mr. Harney, fearlessly facing the fact that he might be accused of lack of indignation against Hayley Morris, boldly declared that legislation thus devised under the influence of indignation against one particular and horrible example should not be extended to all criminals. He declared, and rightly declared, what too few people in this country appreciate, that judges are not archangels, but as other men; that one judge will give severe sentences on sex crimes, another judge will give severe sentences on crimes of violence, and a third on crimes perpetrated by trades unions. He also declared, what everyone knows, that the Court of Criminal Appeal was no real protection against inequality of punishment; for although Lord Reading attempted such a change, it is only in extreme and almost abnormal circumstances that this Court now reverses a decision of a High Court Judge. It depends, therefore, entirely on the caprice of an aged man whether a prisoner who appears before him will get three years or thirteen years of penal servitude, in accordance with whether this particular aged man has an obsession concerning some particular type of crime. No increased punishment, as a united Liberal Party (including Sir Robert Hamilton, in an admirable speech) protested, will either make for prevention of any crime which a man intends to commit, whether in hot passion or in cold, or will make for the reformation of the character of the criminal. Liberals were supported by such Labour men as Mr. Rhys Davies, and would certainly have received the approbation of all modern scientific students of criminals and crime-motives; and, although this private member's bill received its second reading, there is no chance of its passing in its present form.

The thanes are still fleeing from the attenuated Liberal Party, and Mr. Hilton Young has followed the example of Sir Alfred Mond. The Liberal land policy endorsed by the Liberal Convention of last week, is perhaps the excuse, perhaps the opportunity for such mournful departures. The Convention was called by the National Liberal Federation, and, as in the case of all conventions of a similar kind, represented the more conservative elements of the party, for very few of the agricultural labourers and the poorer men in the towns were able to obtain representation. Yet the land policy in its broad outlines, in town and country, was accepted with an increasing enthusiasm, and finally passed unanimously, the Liberals being determined, first, on unity above all things, and, second, on a challenge to the Socialists in an advance towards social reform.

One curious fact remains, and that is the complete reversal of the position of Mr. Lloyd George. Practically every Liberal Member in high position in the Government of the Coalition which he made with the Tories in 1918 has disappeared. Sir Alfred Mond has gone frankly and openly to the Conservatives. Mr. Hilton Young, like the raven dispatched by Noah from his ark, has gone no one knows where. Dr. Addison is supposed to have joined the Labour Party. Sir Hamar Greenwood has vanished into well-merited extinction, and has not opened his mouth for two years in Parliament. Mr. McCurdy has passed from politics to direct a newspaper. Mr. Kellaway has transferred himself from Postmaster-General to the Marconi Company. Mr. Fisher has relinquished the difficult and banal world of politics for the headship of New College, Oxford. Sir Gordon Hewart has entered into the haven where he fain would be. Dr. Macnamara alone remains, and he was a Liberal Minister long before any fissure took place

between two sections of the party. On the other hand, now that Mr. Lloyd George appears to have demonstrated his complete dissociation from Conservative alliance, his main supporters are those who fought bitterly against him for seven years when he headed the Coalition. Lord Beauchamp, who earned universal praise in the Land Conference, Sir John Simon, whom he assassinated at a by-election, Mr. Masterman, who attacked the Coalition with the utmost bitterness, Mr. Francis Acland, Sir Harry Verney, and the land taxers have been swept in by enthusiasm for the Liberal land crusade. Probably three-quarters of the delegates at the Land Conference, were what are called "Asquithians"; and are still loyal to Lord Oxford as leader, and most of them at one time would have regarded support to Mr. Lloyd George as one of the deadly sins. This, indeed, is not anything novel to those who are acquainted with the political history of England during the last hundred years, in which, from time to time, the promulgation of a policy has proved a means of uniting those who thought they would be for ever enemies, and made enemies of those who thought they would be for ever friends. But the Radical Group in Parliament has failed to dominate the country just because it has proposed no Radical measures; or at least no measures similar to those the "Radical-Socialist" Liberal Government advanced in the great years of 1906 to 1914. And most of the Coalition followers of Mr. Lloyd George, who were elected by Conservative votes, appear to have lost their affection for him as soon as he has returned to the Radicalism which is his natural and spiritual home, and have either ferried themselves out of politics into pleasant occupations elsewhere, or are preparing to lift up their wings and fly from policies which they definitely dislike, into the Conservative fold.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

**W**HERE Liberals meet over the coffee cups they talk of the Land Convention chiefly in relation to Lloyd George's personal position. A popular "line" is the following. The whole thing was managed with the customary tactical skill. The steersman had to seize the wheel openly only once to bring the vessel back to the line charted on the White Paper. There are strong doubts all the same whether the (Parliamentary) skipper has strengthened his authority. He has definitely pushed the Right Wingers so much farther to the Right that they are nearly overboard. The Left Wingers are in a state of suspended mutiny. To drop the image, Mr. Lloyd George may be expected to work the tactical success for all and more than it is worth on the platform. The next move will be, probably, a big conference of land workers, convoked at some expense—not an "ecumenical" conference, but useful all the same. An unfriendly observer in talk developed the eccentric theme that Mr. Lloyd George is the greatest Tory-maker of our times. In his Radical days, Tories were bred in the horror he roused. As Coalition leader he produced from raw Liberal material semi-manufactured articles; his return to quasi-Socialism is completing the process.

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But no Liberals that I have come across belittle the extraordinary zest of the Convention; its determination to get things done; its impatience with bores and academics; its anxiety to get on the broad road of unity. Timidity and vagueness, the twin curses of the ordinary political conference, were refreshingly absent. Mr. Lloyd George knew what he was doing when he insisted on getting land-workers up to London. They spoke of real things, and were the star speakers for that reason. Human nature is just the same in the House of Commons, where the back-bencher has always

his respectful hearing when he speaks from the book of life, and not only by the book.

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Mr. Baldwin has been thinking aloud among the Wesleyans. If descent goes for anything, Mr. Baldwin is a Wesleyan himself; at any rate, he can speak the language with a perfection Mr. Lloyd George must be envying. It would be really too bad of fate to replace the latter in the pulpit as well as on the Treasury Bench. Mr. Baldwin has discovered that the Labour Party contains "men who fifty years ago would have gone into the Christian ministry." This is Conservative thinking aloud with a vengeance. It raises a neglected topic for discussion. What, in fact, has happened to the old political Nonconformity? In my youth Liberalism was broad-based upon the Free Churches. I will attempt a tentative answer. I think that Nonconformist idealism has never recovered from the shock of the Coalition. There is a good deal of evidence that, as Mr. Baldwin suggests, the younger Nonconformists are pursuing idealism in the Labour Party, where it is possible another disillusion awaits them. And in the sphere of public morals the Nonconformist conscience, once so powerful, counts for singularly little in the general post-war laxity. Political Nonconformity is very much in the same boat as the standard Liberal causes of the past. Old fights have been won and the new battleground not yet defined. On the personal side Mr. Lloyd George is definitely, for the chapels, a lost leader. Never glad confident morning again.

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"Not one single Tory in the minority"—I take sympathetic note of this pathetic cry in the popular Beaverbrook organ. Months of raging propaganda, and not one single Tory votes against the Government on the Iraq Treaty. Something is wrong. I hastened to re-read "Politicians and the Press" to restore my confidence in the Big One of Fleet Street.

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More than one Liberal voice was raised against the Bill to legalize longer sentences. Hatred of judicial cruelty was burned into me on that day, many years ago, when I saw a Recorder send a tramp to prison for seven years for stealing an old coat. Such a sentence, you may say, was impossible. But as the man in the stocks said to my grandfather, who declared indignantly, "They can't put you there"—"I'm in 'em, sir." "Sickly sentimentality" is an easy gibe, but I maintain the boot is on the other leg. I call it sentimentality, or rather the dexterous manipulation of sentimentality, to take advantage of the peculiar horror, the feverish loss of judgment, always caused by sexual crime, to put a new weapon in the judge's hands. This is retrograde legislation, and legislation in a panic. The whole trend of scientific humanitarianism is against long sentences, which people who are safe and good so glibly recommend. The soothing syrup administered in the debate, that it is all right because the Court of Criminal Appeal exercises mercy, soothes nobody who follows the doings of that Court. As irony the argument is excellent.

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I hear with pleasure that Scotland Yard is at last investigating the methods of the American "jazz salesmen" who have been preying on the innocent and foolish English investor for so long. A friend, who is an expert in crooks, estimates that they have stolen at least two millions in the last three years. The campaign opened in 1923 with the peddling of plots of so-called oil lands in Texas and Arkansas; later these clever rogues made altogether nearly half a million out of Ford Units, by devices described as fraudulent in our Courts. The

quantity of rubbishy American shares that have been got rid of here is prodigious. Lately, I hear, the services of these men have been secured by some notorious British share pushers in the City. They work by personal canvass, and by all accounts are extraordinarily skilful in talking over the inexperienced; as spellbinders they beat Bottomley hollow. What should be done? I am against the use of the Aliens Act as a general thing, but I don't think anyone would repine—certainly not American business men here—if the Home Secretary were to deport the chief offenders. Their names and records are perfectly well known to the authorities. The criminal law in this respect is slow and ineffective; and prosecutions, owing to witnesses being in America, would be terribly expensive. It is a pest and a destructive pest to the happiness of thousands of people, who have not even the sense to know that no reputable company ever sends out canvassers selling shares.

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There are obvious dangers in using the influence of well-meaning royal persons to help the "Buy British Goods" campaign. It is so awkward, for one thing, when some unkind busybody discovers and publishes a Princely testimonial to an *American* firm of typewriter makers. I doubt whether it is any use trying to get people to buy sentimentally. So long as the product is not too absurdly inferior they will buy (like the discredited Economic Man of the text-books) in the cheapest market. I tramped through the vast wholesale shop at the White City, and marvelled at the finest goods in the world. But, as they say, "it wouldn't run to it." I am afraid that is what our customers overseas are saying. The world's pocket is half-empty, and our competitors' shops are cheaper. A deficit cannot be pieced out with rhetoric.

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I had thought with other simple folks that Ellis Island had been eliminated for British people entering America. There was a catch in it, as there often is in these advertised reforms. I suppose this one was too sensible to be true. Besides, if sense had prevailed, I should have missed the serio-comic performance of the Countess Cathcart alternating between prayer, hysterics, and giving interviews. Of course, the U.S. visa issued in London ought to give unquestioned entry, and save us from any revival of this pitiful farce. As a general rule I approve of Early Christianity and turning the other cheek. In this case I have a lively desire to smite the American cheek (with emphasis on the word cheek). Why not establish an Ellis Island of our own, say, in the Hebrides, where, applying the test of "moral turpitude," American jazz comedies could be played to audiences of American divorcées—if the island would hold them. American films could be conveniently banished to the same place in the great cause of fair play for British trade.

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The Tory economists are still in full cry after Mr. Baldwin over the Civil Service sports grant. It is by no means popular among the Civil Servants, many of whom suspect it as jam on the pill of longer hours. Besides, the Service has the honourable love of self-help, and has shown that it can help itself in the matter of sports grounds. At Chiswick on Saturday afternoon, when the King was there, I watched a miniature Olympian games on the fine new ground with which the Service has provided itself, out of its own subscriptions. That's the way to do it. Let the Government withdraw the grant and give the money to reopening the Day Continuation Schools in London.

KAPPA.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## MR. LLOYD GEORGE AS LEADER

SIR.—I am sorry that my plea for sincerity in politics should fill my friend Mrs. Acland with despair. But I do not interpret the spirit of Locarno as an obligation to be guided by leaders we distrust.—Yours, &c.,

February 22nd, 1926.

CHARLES MALLETT

SIR.—Your article of last week on this subject was extremely interesting, but I must confess that I found myself converted by it to precisely the opposite view to that which you professed to advocate. With all that you said of Mr. Lloyd George's past record I am in the fullest sympathy. What could be clearer than his responsibility for the pernicious Treaty of Versailles, or for the Black and Tan outrages in Ireland? I should probably go even further than you do in disliking all that chapter of his career. But it is not because of his past record that you ask us to reject his leadership. You would be prepared, as I gather, to forget the past if he would only behave himself properly now. "There are disconcerting signs," you say, "that the land question has become an obsession with him." He thinks of himself—so you tell us—as another Cobden. He desires to be a great agitator "who will do in the matter of the land what Cobden did in the matter of Free Trade," and an agitator—though his rôle is an honourable one—can never, you think, be satisfactory as the leader of a party.

Surely this is altogether a new doctrine in Liberalism. Was Mr. Gladstone never an agitator? Was he never obsessed with the iniquities of Turkish misrule, or with the urgency of the Irish question? Was the fact that he believed passionately in a Cause regarded by the Liberal editors of that day as a valid objection to his leadership? If so, those Liberal editors were singularly unsuccessful in getting rid of him. But what of your illustration from Cobden's life? Is there not here some confusion of thought? Cobden never desired to be the leader of a party. He knew that he was not qualified for the job. When he first began his agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws he had never sat in Parliament or taken any part in politics. But suppose that Cobden had been a man of a different kind; suppose that he had sat most of his life in Parliament, and had filled four or five high offices of State, and had been for some years a powerful Prime Minister, would the mere fact that he was an advocate of Free Trade have disqualified him for leadership?

The truth is that the Liberal Party is never in a satisfactory state of health unless it is dominated and "obsessed" by a great idea—whether it be Parliamentary Reform or the Repeal of the Corn Laws, or Justice for Ireland, or the limiting of the power of the House of Lords—and unless it is led by a man who believes in the cause he advocates as something even more important than the party itself. You might say that the liberation of the land is not a cause of this kind. In that case, though I should not agree with you, I should still understand your view. But to say, as I understand you to say, that although the land question is highly important; the fact that Mr. Lloyd George is "obsessed" with it makes the prospect of his leadership a dreadful one, seems to me, if I may say so, an entirely unintelligible attitude. Mr. Lloyd George's passionate conviction as to the urgent need of land reform is, I believe, his greatest claim to our support.—Yours, &c.,

PHILIP MORBELL.

Garsington Manor, Oxford.

SIR.—Mr. Roderic Clark's letter and your admirable article to-day on "The Problem of Mr. Lloyd George," touch the real issues on this matter, which, I respectfully suggest, Mrs. Acland's smart verbal criticism of one expression in Sir Charles Mallett's letter only evades.

May I press only one point?

Mrs. Acland is an expert in political organization. I wonder if she would think it wise, or likely to help her cause, to appoint as Election Agent, or even as "Secretary of the Little Puddington Liberal Association," anyone who from 1918 to 1923 had been helping Tory candidates to defeat Liberal candidates all over the country, and only

ceased doing so when he was dismissed. Yet she wishes such a one to be Leader of the Liberal Party!—Yours, &c.,

W. S. ROWNTREE.

Scarborough, February 20th, 1926.

SIR.—May I, as a life-long Free Trader, and Joint Secretary of the late Asquithian Liberal Organization in Wales, be allowed to say that I am in entire agreement with your correspondent, Mrs. H. M. Swanwick, that "it is not a question of 'likes and dislikes,' but of deep and rooted distrust founded on many past experiences"?

(1) Reunion between the two wings of the party in Wales took place only on the basis of strict adherence to Free Trade and the repeal of all legislation resting on Protection and Imperial Preference.

(2) At the Llandrindod Conference, the Chairman of the Asquithian Organization, Mr. F. H. Lambert, as a life-long Free Trader, when proposing Mr. Lloyd George's election as President of the united party, referred explicitly to the basis of Free Trade on which Unity rested.

(3) Within a few weeks of Mr. Lloyd George's election he "paired in favour of four resolutions favouring Imperial Preference, and so disregarded the pledge which rested at the root of the unity of the party in Wales.

(4) When his attention was called to this violation of the pledge, he justified his action on the ground that the Colonies had come to our help during the war, and, when a demand was put forward for a meeting of the executive to be called to discuss the matter, he put his foot down and declined.

These facts explain why so many Free Traders in Wales are distrustful of having Mr. Lloyd George as leader of the Liberal Party, and that it is not a question of personal liking or disliking, but of distrust, founded on past experience.—Yours, &c.,

LLEWELYN DAVIES.

Penarth, Glam.

February 16th, 1926.

SIR.—I have read your article under the above title with surprise and with dismay. The article attempts a judicial summing up of various estimates of the career of Mr. Lloyd George, and the conclusion apparently is that Mr. Lloyd George must be unwillingly tolerated in the Liberal team as a sort of boorish professional who can always be relied upon to score most of the runs, but who must never be dreamed of as the captain. May I respectfully suggest that the view you advance is not only ungracious, but positively insulting? May I further suggest that the article renders a grave disservice to the Liberal Party at a peculiarly inopportune time? While the Land Convention is in session, and while most valuable results are being achieved, your article is produced with its obvious suggestion that the land campaign inspired by Mr. Lloyd George is a vain and dangerous obsession. When the Land Convention has produced certain effective, vibrant calls to action, your article breathes the faltering note of hesitancy and distils an atmosphere of dull despair.

As one who has had the privilege of contesting a seat at the last two elections, I record it as my view that the people in the constituencies do not consider that there is any "problem" of Mr. Lloyd George. From my observation my opinion is that all Liberals in the country are and wish to be entirely loyal to Lord Oxford as the leader of the party, that they are and wish to be keen supporters of the other distinguished leaders in the party, and that the vast majority regard Mr. Lloyd George as the greatest asset of the party. His name has been associated with, and his energy has contributed to, every big success of the Liberal Party in recent years. His brilliance is never challenged. His power and his courage make him a born leader. To every one of the items on the debit side of your estimate there is an answer. And to suggest that "most Liberals at that time" were against the Coalition Government is an unwarranted statement.

I concur in appreciating the value of frank discussion, but with every desire to arrive at a fair view, my opinion is that your article was idle in its conception and false in its conclusion.—Yours, &c.,

J. W. MORRIS.

Farrar's Building, Temple, E.C.4.

[We wrote our article last week under the feeling that the correspondence which had arisen in our columns about

Mr. Lloyd George had run on long enough, but that, before terminating it, we owed it to our readers to state our own point of view fully and candidly, especially as we had been conscious of misleading some by an incomplete comment. We shall only add that we meant what we said, neither more nor less—every qualification as much as every positive statement. With the publication of the above letters, inevitably only a sample of those which have reached us, we think it desirable that the correspondence should now cease; and we refrain accordingly from replying to the criticism of our attitude.—ED., THE NATION.]

#### FASCISM AND FORGERY

SIR,—THE NATION of February 13th reached me too late to reply last week to Sir William Goode's letter, which suggests that communications with Awakening Magyars have corrupted his good manners. Sir William Goode is really too modest in giving Count Bethlen all the credit for Hungarian financial reconstruction. His own valuable services as financial adviser to the Hungarian Government must not be forgotten. Nobody will deny that the handsome salary that he received for those services—£3,000 a year, if I am not mistaken—has been more than earned. Nothing published about Hungary in England or America seems to escape Sir William Goode's vigilant eye. He must be worth half-a-dozen Press agents to the Hungarian Government. I have no doubt that the Polish Government, for which, I understand, he is now trying to raise a loan, will have equal reason to be grateful to him.

It can hardly be necessary that I should repudiate Sir William Goode's pleasant insinuation that I am the instrument of sinister designs on the part of France and the Little Entente. My past record is a sufficient answer to an imputation that must have caused some hilarity at the Quai d'Orsay. I remain convinced that the Hungarian abscess needs to be pricked, but I fail to understand why that process should involve the destruction of Hungary unless, indeed, any doctor literally performing the same operation on a patient is to be regarded as a potential murderer. I did not, however, and do not ask for a "free hand for France" to prick the abscess with a needle of the Ruhr, or any other, pattern. I seem to remember that M. Poincaré refused to allow the matter of the Ruhr to be referred to the League of Nations precisely because that would have deprived France of a free hand. One of the reasons why I desire an international investigation of the Hungarian plot is that it would avert any possible danger of separate action on the part of any Power.

The suggestion, however, that France has any interest in invading Hungary is so grotesque that Sir William Goode could hardly have made it, had he not allowed his feelings to overcome him. France had an opportunity of getting a free hand in Hungary when Sir William Goode's patriotic Hungarian friends invited the French to invade Hungary to overthrow the Communist Government. M. Clemenceau very properly declined the invitation. Far from wishing to exploit the banknote forgeries, even against the Horthy régime, the Quai d'Orsay would have much preferred to hush up this scandal, as it hushed up that of the Czechoslovakian forgeries. For it was under French pressure that the Czechoslovakian Government took no further action in that matter, although the Hungarian Government made no reply to its last official Note on the subject. When the three jolly forgers were arrested in Holland, the Quai d'Orsay gave out to the Press that it was a case of ordinary crime with no political significance, and sent out a *mot d'ordre* to say as little as possible about it. That *mot d'ordre* was obeyed by what Sir William Goode calls the "subsidized Press," and for quite a fortnight the *QUOTIDIEN*, an independent organ of the Left, which is subsidized by no Government, was the only French paper that gave any information to speak of about the matter. Even now the French papers of the Right publish as little as they can about it, and the Budapest correspondent of the *TEMPS* is plainly a mouthpiece of the Hungarian Government. The change in the attitude of the French Government was in the first place due to the admirable campaign of the *QUOTIDIEN*, and, in the second place, to the irresistible evidence of a far-reaching conspiracy. The big *journaux d'information* such as the *MATIN* and the *PETIT PARISIEN*, took up the matter only when it was impossible to keep

silence any longer, and when they saw a chance of exploiting it against Germany.

"Kick the under-dog and kick him harder when he limps." I thank Sir William Goode for that sentence, which admirably describes the policy of the corrupt and blood-stained oligarchy, to whose tender mercies the Hungarian people have been handed over without their consent. I am, forsooth, an enemy of Hungary because I suggest that the Hungarian people should be consulted and that the oppression of the "under-dog" should cease. The worst enemies of Hungary are the Horthy gang and their supporters in other countries.

I cannot but appreciate the involuntary tribute that Sir William Goode pays to my accuracy, inasmuch as he can find in my article only two statements of fact that he can venture to dispute and those, as he himself says, concerning matters of no "real importance." Surely in my "five columns of misrepresentation" he could have found something of real importance to refute, and in a letter of more than a column he could have spared more than half-a-dozen lines for questions of fact. His opinions are no doubt interesting, but an authoritative pronouncement on some of the facts by a qualified representative of the Hungarian Government would have been more interesting.

Even of the two inaccuracies discovered by Sir William Goode in an article of five columns, only one is really an inaccuracy. I was mistaken in saying that Count Bethlen and Count Teleki were brothers-in-law. They are cousins, and are on terms of the closest and most intimate friendship. I was, on the other hand, right in saying that Count Teleki had an official connection with the Cartographical Institute, where the forged notes were printed, for that Institute is under the joint control of the Institute or Society of Geography, of which Count Teleki is President, and the Ministry of War. Moreover, Count Teleki has now admitted that he introduced Geroë, the expert of the Cartographical Institute, to Windisch-Graetz, in 1923. Count Teleki says, it is true, that he merely wished to convince Windisch-Graetz of the technical difficulties of the enterprise. What he said to Windisch-Graetz was, presumably, something of this sort: "Well, my dear fellow, just as you please, of course, but I warn you that it is more difficult to forge banknotes than you seem to imagine. I'll send you round a man who knows all about it, and he will explain to you how it is done."

I regret to be unable to share Sir William Goode's opinion that the Hungarian Government has made an "honest effort" to find out the truth, and even a quotation from the *TIMES* does not convince me, for, much as I respect the leading English newspaper, I have not yet accepted the dogma of its infallibility. Besides, the article in the *TIMES* from which Sir William Goode quotes seemed to me from internal evidence to have been inspired, if not actually written, by Sir William Goode himself. It repeated almost verbatim the arguments of his article in the *OBSERVER* and his other public utterances on the subject. Count Bethlen's own admissions make it impossible to believe in his good faith in the matter. He has now admitted to the parliamentary committee of inquiry that Windisch-Graetz told him about his little plans at the end of 1922 or the beginning of 1923. Count Bethlen thereupon informed Count Teleki, who had already, he found, heard about the matter from Windisch-Graetz, and Nadossy, who was at the moment engaged in stifling the affair of the forged Czechoslovak notes. Count Bethlen seems never since that date to have asked Nadossy what he was doing about the matter, and the reason why, according to his own explanation, he had never mentioned until two or three days ago the information given him by Windisch-Graetz three years ago was that it had entirely escaped his memory! Is any further proof needed of the complicity of the Hungarian Government? Perhaps, as I have said, the "occult Government," backed as it was by Admiral Horthy, was too strong for Count Bethlen, but he could always have resigned and given publicly the reasons of his resignation. Or rather, he could have taken that course, had he not been hopelessly compromised.

The general failure in England to appreciate the full significance of the Hungarian plot and the excuses made in the English Press for the criminals and their accomplices seem to me to be fraught with danger. Apart from all other considerations, it is most unfortunate that, at a moment

when we must oppose France on the question of the League Council about which the French Government is clearly in the wrong, we should also appear to be opposing France in a matter about which the French Government is in the right. The article in the *Times* quoted by Sir William Goode, and the general attitude of the English Press about the matter are being cited in France in support of the theory that it is enough that France should take one side for England to take the other. Unfortunately, too many people in England, especially on the Left, act and talk in a way to give colour to that theory. Sir William Goode knows how to appeal to this unreasoning prejudice.

Much more serious, however, is the international aspect of the matter. Supposing that the coup had come off, and the Archduke Albert had been put on the throne of Hungary, what might not have happened, especially if, as there is too much reason to believe, Italy was in the plot? In this connection I urge every reader of this letter to read the remarkable article by the Hungarian journalist, M. Emery Déri, in the New York *Nation* of February 3rd, which confirms and amplifies what I said in my article.

The danger of a coup in Hungary is not finally averted, and there are other dangers. The desire in France to exploit against Germany the implication of certain Germans in the plot is only too evident. On the other hand, although the Czechoslovakian Note to the Hungarian Government is moderate and reasonable, and threatens nothing worse than an appeal to the League of Nations, there is always the danger that events in Hungary might be exploited for certain Czechoslovakian Nationalist ambitions. There was recently a revival in the Prague Press of the old demand for a "corridor" through Hungary to connect Czechoslovakia with Jugoslavia and thus with the sea.

We shall not avert such dangers by remaining indifferent and doing nothing, still less by defending the indefensible. In my opinion, they can be completely averted only by a thorough investigation by the League of Nations into all the Hungarian forgeries of the last six years, their political implications, and the responsibility for them of the Hungarian Government. If that Government is so innocent as Sir William Goode holds, what has it to fear?—Yours, &c.,

ROBERT DELL.

February 21st, 1926.

SIR,—Sir William Goode protests against Mr. Robert Dell calling the Magyar ruling classes "extraordinarily unscrupulous, arrogant, irresponsible, and frivolous," and Hungary, "the land of comic opera." To-day I see in the papers Count Teleki's deposition to the Hungarian police in connection with the forgery affair—a deposition forced from him by Count Emerich Karolyi's threat. In substance Count Teleki—who, it must be remembered, until now has always been regarded outside Hungary as the one outstanding character among the Hungarian nobility—admits (I quote an official Reuter message) this:—

"About four years ago Prince Louis Windisch-Graetz told him that he (the Prince) had been approached by a foreigner with a scheme for forging banknotes. He (Count Teleki) refused emphatically to have anything to do with the scheme, which he considered to be absurd. As, however, he considered that the simplest way of disposing of these fantastic plans would be to prove the technical impossibilities in the way, he recommended to him the expert Geroe, of the Cartographical Institute.

"When he sent Geroe to the Prince he advised him, if things did not seem to be all right, to have nothing more to do with Prince Windisch-Graetz. At the same time he informed the police that he had information regarding the plan. On returning from his visit to the Prince, Geroe made a satisfactory report that the plan was confronted with insurmountable technical difficulties, and after this Count Teleki was convinced that the scheme had been nipped in the bud."

Can there be a more fitting vindication of Mr. Dell's statement that "at heart a Magyar aristocrat believes that all things are permitted to a Magyar aristocrat . . . *Noblesse relâche*"? Just imagine—if we may repeat Mr. Dell's demonstration *ad personam*—Mr. XY approaching, say, Viscount Cecil (who will also forgive the impossible hypothesis) with the suggestion for forging a currency with the aim of destroying the credit of an unpopular country; and just imagine Viscount Cecil, far from communicating with either the police or the Commissioners in Lunacy, referring

Mr. XY to an expert of the Stationery Office to prove the "insurmountable technical difficulties" of the scheme.

Could such a situation arise anywhere but in the land of comic opera?—Yours, &c.,

C. J. C. STREET.

22, Suffolk Street, S.W.1, February 17th, 1926.

#### LIBERALISM AND LABOUR

SIR,—In his recent speech at Manchester, the substance of which is given in your current issue, Mr. Keynes said: "The brains and character of the Conservative Party have always been recruited from Liberals, and we must not grudge them the excellent material with which, in accordance with our historic mission, we are now preserving them from intellectual starvation." Surely Mr. Keynes was pulling the legs of the Manchester Liberals? Each party has from time to time drawn recruits from the other. For example, the Conservatives drew into their ranks Goschen, the late Duke of Devonshire, and Chamberlain. On the other hand, the Liberal Party owed its most eminent leader in history to the Conservatives. As you point out in another page of the same issue, thirty years ago "the essence of being a Liberal in the public mind was to be a devotee of Mr. Gladstone." Turning to later years, the Liberal Party secured for twenty years and made very full use of the brilliant services of Mr. Winston Churchill. Will any serious student of politics maintain that on balance the Liberal Party was the loser by these exchanges, or that Beaconsfield, the late Lord Salisbury, and Mr. Balfour are outclassed in intellectual distinction by Campbell-Bannerman, Lord Oxford, and even Mr. Lloyd George?

In giving the reasons why he would not feel comfortable as a full member of the Labour Party, Mr. Keynes laid stress on the "selfish and sectional pretensions" of the largest element of that party, and the advocacy of the class war by another element. He must, therefore, have been speaking in irony when, at the end of his speech, he said that "Social Justice," which he defines as "an unselfish and enthusiastic spirit, which loves the ordinary man . . . is the best possession of the great party of the Proletariat."

—Yours, &c.,

C. R. V. COURTS.

25-31, Moorgate, E.C.2.

February 22nd, 1926.

#### FREDERIC HARRISON

SIR,—Mr. Woolf in his interesting and amusing page expresses the opinion that Frederic Harrison "was born old and conservative and respectable." Some entertaining chaff in Matthew Arnold's delightful "Friendship's Garland," suggests that in 1866 Harrison was none of these things:—

"My elevated position in Grub Street, Sir, where I sit communing with the stars, commands a view of a certain spacious and secluded back yard; and in that back yard, Sir, I tell you confidentially that I saw the other day with my own eyes that powerful young publicist, Mr. Frederic Harrison, in full evening costume, furbishing up a guillotine."

On another page there is an amusing reference to "the celebrated young Comtist, Mr. Frederic Harrison."

When Frederic Harrison was about ninety years of age, I heard him give an animated and youthful address at the National Liberal Club. Like most of us, he was probably often wrong, but in advanced age he was an inspiring personality.—Yours, &c.,

C. W.

#### FORM AND CONTENT

SIR,—If the dreamy Mr. J. D. Beresford is not trailing his coat for unwary zealots like me, his moving confession is an excuse for digging the creator of "W. E. Ford" in the ribs. The reason why "it isn't the subject that matters, but the way you treat it," is that style means effective expression of truth, so that the "matter" of it, like the commonest words in a poem, is transfigured, placed in new relationships with eternal ideas. Mr. Doughty may possibly make mistakes in practice, but in theory he is quite right to "value his style more than his matter." Without style, you have all the "matter" anybody could desire in "Blue Books," and other ornaments of a big reference library.—Yours, &c.,

R. L. MÉGROZ.

## THE CIGARETTE

BY STELLA BENSON.

**S**NOW had interrupted the regular train service, such as it was. Really, of course, it *wasn't*, ever. This particular Manchurian railway is a perfect martyr to chronic irregularity. Snow, let us say, had for over a week given the valetudinarian train an excuse to stay tucked up in its siding like a real bedridden invalid. But snow melts, even in Manchuria, and coolies commanded to clear away drifts over a stretch of fifteen miles are sometimes officious enough to do what they are told. So the train had to make a move. It mustered itself in the station, puffing and whooping to advertise its virtue.

Passengers swarmed to it like bees. The third-class was full before the sun came up—so full that the limbs of passengers were sticking out of every door and window. The second-class overflowed as the preliminary toolings of departure began. And a minute before the train started, a surplus thirty or so of unmistakable third-class passengers brimmed over into the first-class. The damned had burst the bounds of their outer darkness and trickled into Paradise, timidly at first, but presently bold with sheer necessity. They were all Koreans. Koreans are always damned. They may have their despicable reasons for reaching their despicable homes, but they must never be allowed to reach anything except with great difficulty. Everywhere in Korea and north-eastern Manchuria, Koreans may be seen travelling—against the grain. Nothing ever goes right on a Korean journey. Wherever there is water to cross, ferryboats frothing over with uncomplaining Korean passengers may be seen stuck hopelessly on sandbanks in the middle of the stream, the passengers obediently leaping up and down to try and jerk their craft out of the dilemma. Wherever there is ice to cross, the bullock cart containing a Korean house-moving is always the one to break through. On high roads the Korean family donkey or ox always has to draw aside into a snow-drift to let the Ford car of the Japanese empire-builder go by. On railways nobody ever tells Koreans when the train is going to start, and half the family is generally left behind. If they finally manage to reach their destinations, Japanese or Chinese soldiers will most probably lock them in the ticket office for an hour or two while they search them for arms with rude, prodding hands. The Korean traveller must, it is clear, be always hours late everywhere. He travels like a beetle in a forest, over and round incredible obstacles. Yet still he travels, unresisting yet unsurrendering, puzzled yet singlehearted, always a little sad, often a little drunk, but always gentle.

This was the first train for a week, and probably the last for a week, and passengers, humble though they might be, would not be denied. The Koreans filled the train as a herd of kind, white cows might have filled it. The barbed snarls and clamourings of the real first-class passengers glanced without effect from their patient, immobile determination, from their white, padded hide.

The first-class had only their honour to defend, so to speak. There was little actual superiority in their Paradise. Their windows were broken, their stove belched smoke without heat, their cushions, though of a luscious blue plush, were full of fleas. Half the passengers, too, were ticketless and travelled first-class only by virtue of being relations or friends of the trainmen. Still Paradise is Paradise—and the first-class passengers were none of them native to the country they were in—

a fact which gives any sinner a free pass into an imperial Paradise. Before the avalanche of native Koreans buried the first-class passengers, they were seen to consist of a large Chinese in blue, padded silk, with a flapped fur cap like a great four-leaved clover—his shivering wife in unpadded brocade, unhatted except for an artificial daisy in her back hair—a Japanese in skin-tight corduroy, his bloated expression spangled with gold-rimmed glasses and gold teeth, reading aloud to himself in a harsh, chanting voice—his wife, with a face like a camelia petal under the great varnished, looped globe of her hair, her body folded in a dark steel-blue kimono, humped at the back where her thick silk sash was tied—their child in a magenta kimono splashed violently with mustard-coloured and green chrysanthemums, its face extinguished by a dirty pink plush hat, as worn in the Mile End Road, London. . . . There were, too, an Englishman and his wife, the Englishman's Chinese servant, and a Russian in a tattered, grey, military coat and high fur cap.

Next to the Englishwoman sat a Korean father with his little son strapped on to his lower back. His sitting down was like the collapse of a white elephant. He was padded to about twice his original size with layers of quilted white robes. And he was heightened to half his original height again by his multiplied steeping head-dresses—a fur hood with a little hole in the top through which soared a six-inch high dome. On the summit of the dome wobbled the tiny black top-hat, the senseless and heroic badge of the Korean race. It was tied under his chin with black ribbons. With a sigh, he sat back on the blue plush seat, using his baby as a cushion. The compressed baby, which had a white quilted robe and a fur hood of its own, but no top-hat, breathed with difficulty, owing to the weight of its father, but looked about with a subdued, sly interest. From time to time it stretched out a little, dirty chilblained hand to stroke the fur shoulder of the Englishwoman.

The protesting voice of the Englishman's Chinese servant survived all the other first-class protests against the Korean invasion. His proud imperial talk so impressed the conductor that some of the Koreans who had dared to sit near the stove were abruptly removed that the Englishman might be offered the seat of cindery honour. But the English passengers refused; they preferred air to honour. They were between the door and a broken window, and they would not relinquish that faint flavour of outer air which reached them in their present position through the stewing smoke and smell. They religiously breathed through cigarettes, turning their noses hopefully towards a crack between the gaping door and its frame. But this crack was a doomed loophole. The eyes of thirty intruding Koreans were upon it. "Since we have, for once, attained the seats of the mighty," they thought, "let us, for once, be comfortable. Let the consoling smell of hot relations and friends be, for once, undiluted by common air." The Korean next to the Englishwoman leaned forward and shut the gaping door. In doing so he passed his much-sleeved arm across the Englishwoman's face and accidentally wiped her cigarette from her lips. His wide innermost cuff devoured the lighted cigarette. The Englishwoman looked at him in alarm, remembering the inflammable nature of cotton wadding.

"Excuse me," she said, in English. "My cigarette has gone up your sleeve."

The Korean and his attached baby turned a blank benevolent double gaze upon her.

"My cigarette," persisted the Englishwoman, making a gesture intended to represent an explosion, "has gone up your sleeve. You will burst into flames."

The Korean's thin grey beard, still slightly bedewed with hoar-frost, wagged a little as he followed conscientiously the expansive movements of her hands. He looked gently surprised. He was absolutely convinced that he and the Englishwoman could have nothing in common—nothing to say to one another.

A chorus arose from the other passengers—in Japanese, Chinese, and Russian. Nobody knew quite what had happened, but everyone felt convinced that the Korean had done something wrong. Everyone had known all along that the Koreans would do something wrong. The Korean exchanged a sombre glance of intelligence with a Korean friend. "Look what comes of associating with foreigners," the glance said.

Was there a faint smell of burning, or was it only the Englishwoman's heated imagination? She imagined the cigarette, wickedly active in dark, involuted ways beyond calculation, gnawing at the vitals of her gentle neighbour. She made a final effort. Seizing the sufferer desperately by his cushioned arm to pin his attention, she made an exaggerated show of shaking her own arm downwards. Such enthusiasm did she show that the whole plush seat quaked and several little Korean top-hats were joggled crooked. All the Koreans watched her for a moment, probably thinking, "She has a flea. What of it?" Then they sighed, and began talking in low voices one to another about something else, as well-bred people talk to discourage the offensive advances of a vulgar stranger.

At the next station they all got out with the customary Korean manner of hopeful blundering. Perhaps this was their station, perhaps it wasn't. They would know all in good time.

The Englishwoman watched her Korean as he stood on the snowy platform hitching up his baby by means of a bucking movement of the lower spine. Out of the back of his neck she could distinctly see a thin thread of smoke rising. The baby's nose, immediately above the crater of this unsuspected volcano, was wrinkled in surprise. The Korean himself put his little hat straight on its steeple with a dignified hand and turned away, leaving a thin curling wire of smoke behind him on the cold air.

## CONTEMPORARY WRITERS\*

### IV.—ALDOUS HUXLEY

By EDWIN MUIR.

**I**T is about five years since Mr. Huxley first became known to the public. A small volume of verse, "The Defeat of Youth," had appeared before that, but it did not arouse much attention. "Limbo" did; and since its appearance Mr. Huxley has written eight books, comprising novels, short stories, a poem, and two volumes of essays. Productiveness such as this is unusual, but as remarkable as Mr. Huxley's industry has been his popularity. Most of his books have run into a third impression; even his essays and poems have been popular. No other writer of our time has built up a serious reputation so rapidly and so surely; compared with his rise to acceptance that of Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Eliot has been gradual, almost painful. Mr. Huxley's public capitulated almost at the first stroke of his pen, and they have been docile ever since. They

\* No. I. Lytton Strachey, No. II. D. H. Lawrence, No. III. T. S. Eliot appeared in THE NATION of April 25th, July 4th, and August 29th respectively.

have found in his works less a point of view than an affinity; they are as delighted with what he says as if a part of themselves, a part of themselves weary of humbug and the burdens it imposes, were saying it. To all those in difficulties, to everybody, a profound sense of relief is given if they are told at the right moment that what they take to be their soul is in reality their liver. The relief is great because the problem is at once simplified and its dimensions sensibly reduced. Mr. Huxley has been telling us in a variety of ways that it is our liver. It is a hit or miss diagnosis, as true, perhaps, as M. Coué's, but as one-sided, and essentially of the same order. It is also a peculiarly English kind of truth, for nowhere are prejudices and crotchets more really respected than in England.

But of the many writers who are saying that it is our liver, no one says it so gracefully, so passionately, almost so entrancingly, as Mr. Huxley. Other writers of his generation, indeed most of them, have been disposed to reduce emotions, ideals, sentimentalities, to their elements, but no one else has done it so effectively and so amusingly. Mr. Huxley is so effective, partly because he has the power of disengaging his mind as if it were an impersonal instrument and letting it operate a little diabolically for its own purposes, and partly because that mind is never too complex for the immediate task, the pricking of an illusion. It does what it sets out to do; it desires to do no more; it is extraordinarily effective and completely without nuance. The style which is its instrument is agreeable, lively, continuously graceful, but it rarely attempts anything that would be likely to strain its powers. Effectiveness, then, Mr. Huxley has in a striking degree. He has a complete grasp of ways and means; he is seldom in difficulties; he excels with ease in every form he sets his hand to. But all this, one feels, is achieved at the expense of something complex, immediate, and essential, for which he does not seem to have striven. His style is supple, natural, felicitous; but he has never expressed in it a profound truth, nor described with it a living character. And if it be asked why he should have done so, the reply is that he has written novels and in them has been perpetually obsessed by certain types and by the philosophical problems their lives present. He has called forth these types and these problems; he has written a great deal about them; but he has never really dealt with them.

He has not done so because beneath all his freedom, his engaging licentiousness, of intellect, there persists a certain conventionality, a certain banality. In "Those Barren Leaves," he presents the figure of a meretricious, unhappy, middle-aged woman who thinks she is in love with a young poet. For the imagination a figure such as this held endless possibilities. Mr. Huxley had the opportunity of exploiting these possibilities and of revealing Mrs. Aldwinkle's soul. This, however, he never attempts. He portrays Mrs. Aldwinkle simply as a nuisance; the reaction of his imagination to her is precisely the same as the reaction of one of her own set might be. And as he deals with Mrs. Aldwinkle he deals with almost all of his characters. His art is not one of comprehension; it is one of exposure. He is content—and it is a sign of a certain naïveté of mind—if he succeeds in stripping the make-believe from people. In "Antic Hay" Gummibil, Lypiatt, Mercaptan, the egregious Rosie, are all stripped of their hypocrisies; but we are given no inkling of the sources from which these hypocrisies spring. Mr. Huxley dislikes hypocrisies with a fury which might be that of a moralist, but is not; the obvious truth is that he has not tried to understand them. For him they might be completely arbitrary, and spring from no cause more particular than the general turpitude of the human race. Because people are one thing and appear another, as they have always done, and for their self-preservation must always do, he is enraged. But the objects of his indignation are nothing less than the laws of adaptation, the conditions of civilized existence, the attributes of human nature. All this makes Mr. Huxley as a novelist, as a portrayer of actual men and women, extraordinarily limited; it makes him as a satirist sometimes very penetrating. Not

seeing complexities he cannot be deceived by them ; and he maintains therefore through thick and thin, through everything perhaps but romantic love, his hold upon the ineradicable hypocrisy of the human race.

Yet often one is puzzled to tell why he does so. It is not because he is openly on the side of virtue, nor is it because he is fascinated, as Baudelaire was, by evil. He has the moral rage, without the morality, of a satirist ; and although the effect is unintentional, sometimes he gives the impression of sitting on the fence, of a little irresolutely trying to make the worst of both worlds. We see him pursuing the perfectly worthless, the perfectly inoffensive Rosie through "Antic Hay" with an inexplicable hostility, in which there is a complete lack of moral purpose. Why should he do so? Obviously it is because his satire is not a criticism of hypocrisy, but a reaction to it. He does not set out to show hypocrisy in its essence and to trace its results, as he would be bound to do if he saw it objectively ; he simply sets it down as an object of his dislike. He reacts to it in his characters ; he reacts to it, also, in himself. This is a kind of honesty which is rare ; but it is one which at the same time is in tune with this age and representative of it. This honesty is not discerning ; it is content to convict us of the venial sins, and it takes a certain pleasure in thus humiliating us. It is an honesty to certain immediate reactions each of which is apprehended in a desert of banality, in the perfect waste left by the disappearance of conceptions, ideals, orders, which were accepted by other ages. It is so faithful to the immediate reactions that it does not permit us to seek for their causes. And so, if there is no philosophy, no attempt to account for the world in general, in Mr. Huxley's books, neither is there any psychology. And, curiously enough, it is this that makes him such a perfect representative of one current of feeling of the age. The crash of an order which was preparing before the War, and which the War precipitated, does seem to have left a generation who in their universal uncertainty doubt even such terms as the world and the mind, are sceptical of any conclusions which may be drawn from the existence of these things, and are prepared to accept only the sensations they feel and the deceptions practised by everybody to conceal them. No contemporary writer has portrayed these sensations and seen through these deceptions more clearly than Mr. Huxley. He fills the scene completely, and what is as essential, he does no more than fill it. There could not be a more perfect example of the writer of transition.

To be so completely of the period, to say unerringly what nine out of ten literate people wish to be said, finally to say it gracefully and wittily—this is in a sense its own reward, this is at the same time to be of service to one's generation if not to posterity. The writer who can do it must have talents of a high order ; but he must also have definite limitations, must share as much in the blindness as in the knowledge of his period. He must see just what his contemporaries see, see it with no less knowledge, but also with no more profundity. He must never lift a veil from things ; he must rather present everything in such a way that it has merely to be recognized. He must share without afterthought in the taste of the age ; he must be as transitory, as onesided, as limited, as blind, as it. He must be all this, for this is the penalty exacted in exchange for the glance of immediate recognition, of instinctive sympathy, which his work provokes. And if we take almost any scene from Mr. Huxley's novels we can see how exactly these requirements are fulfilled, how completely these limitations are observed. He is presenting the histrionic Lypiatt, the unsuccessful artist who has to talk loud to deceive himself :—

"Mrs. Viveash stood looking at the picture on the easel (abstract again—she did not like it) and Lypiatt, who had dropped his hand from her shoulder, had stepped back the better to see her, stood earnestly looking at Mrs. Viveash.

"May I kiss you?" he asked, after a pause.

Mrs. Viveash turned towards him, smiling agonisingly, her eyebrows ironically lifted, her eyes steady and calm and palely, brightly inexpressive. "If

it really gives you any pleasure," she said. "It won't, I may say, to me."

"You make me suffer a great deal," said Lypiatt, and said it so quietly and unaffectedly, that Myra was almost startled ; she was accustomed, with Casimir, to noisier and more magniloquent protestations.

"I'm very sorry," she said ; and really she felt sorry. "But I can't help it, can I?"

"I suppose you can't," he said. "You can't," he repeated, and his voice had now become the voice of Prometheus in his bitterness. "Nor can tigresses." He had begun to pace up and down the unobstructed fairway between his easel and the door ; Lypiatt liked pacing while he talked. "You like playing with the victim, he went on ; 'he must die slowly.'

"Reassured, Mrs. Viveash faintly smiled."

That is a fair example of Mr. Huxley's method, and how telling it is, but how perfectly on the surface, how crude even ! The essence of this satire is that Lypiatt is not for a moment understood ; if he were, another kind of satire would be necessary to do justice to him. He is not a human being with innumerable interests, with many masks, and with a past to explain them. He is rather one set of interests only, one mask which never varies and has no existence before and after his appearance in the book. His life begins at forty and continues for a few weeks ; apart from these he is a perfect blank, an inexplicable void. In Mr. Huxley's novels we are given a succession of impressions of people we have never met before, with whom we never become intimate, and who are never explained. The author tears their masks away, but there is nothing underneath. The prolonged scrutiny which would discern variety in these figures and would thus humanize them he never casts in their direction. He is completely in the present, and he finds it exciting, exasperating, amusing. The humours, the lusts, the hypocrisies, the snobberies—he discovers them all there, and he portrays them. But they remain disembodied. They are not qualities belonging to specific characters and coloured by that fact ; they are general attributes of human nature.

All this, then, makes Mr. Huxley as a novelist a very unsatisfying, almost an incongruous figure. We feel there is no necessity why he should have chosen the novel rather than another form for what he has to say. It provides him with a loose frame for his intellectual fantasies ; and in that frame his ideas are more piquant, perhaps, than they would be without it. But it is an improvisation, not a form ; it has a utilitarian, but not an aesthetic, reason for existing. And in choosing it Mr. Huxley has certainly lost more than he has gained. For the fantastic little essays and dialogues—"the delicious little middles"—for which his stories are chiefly read, lose a great deal by being put in the mouths of people whom we find shoddy, ill-made, second-rate, and in any case much less interesting than their author himself, who is in reality speaking. Mr. Huxley's work consists essentially in a running argument, sometimes ingenuous, sometimes ironical, with himself. But he interposes between us and this interesting dispute his Gumbils, Lypiatts, Mercaptans, and worse ; and they are tiresome ; they stand between us and the theme, they make the author's utterance one degree more false. Unfortunately there is no getting over the bad effects of an error of this kind. Mistakes in the choice of form are fatal ; they spring either from a lack of artistic conscience, or from a debility of imagination ; and in either case the writer, unable to see how things will work out, is inevitably driven to mere improvisation. Mr. Huxley has intelligence, fancy, and wit, but little imagination : and he has chosen the prose form in which imagination is most indispensable. When he resigns it for the purely fantastic, the purely intellectual, as in the short story of the dwarf in "Chrome Yellow," we feel immediately that his talents are heightened and that his work becomes original and serious. In that story his intellectual fancy is not an irrelevance, as it is in his novels, it is an animating principle. This kind of story may well be the form which suits his gifts. He has found it once ; he may yet achieve something large in it. As it is, it outweighs everything else he has written, and is the best criticism that exists of the remainder of his work.

*To Tell*

## FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA

No one who likes to see a first-class play, perfectly produced, should put off for a single day going to "The Three Sisters" of Chekhov, produced by M. Komissarjevsky at the Barnes Theatre. Immediately after writing it, Chekhov called it an "inconvenient" play—and added: "I say inconvenient because it has four heroines and a spirit, as they say, more gloomy than gloom." "Inconvenient" is about the last word which one would apply to M. Komissarjevsky's production of it. The scenery and dresses, the arrangement, the balance are almost perfect; nothing is here over-emphasized, nothing missed. And M. Komissarjevsky has succeeded in instilling into the actors his own exquisite sense of balance. As for the play itself, between the acts one of our distinguished dramatic critics enthusiastically told me that he considered it the best of Chekhov's plays. I do not agree with him, but it is certainly very near the best, and that is amazingly good. The spirit is indeed more gloomy than gloom, but it is a gloom brilliantly illuminated by Chekhov's charming humour (the audience were laughing most of the time) and by his queer subtlety. There are, too, things in it of extraordinarily delicate and dramatic beauty, not merely the scenes between the sisters in the third act, but also certain subtle strokes in the character of the doctor and in the speech of Kuligin to his wife, when her lover, the Colonel, has left her, and the regiment is heard marching away to the sound of the band.

\* \* \*

They say that "Wildflower" was a hardy biennial in New York; but that is no excuse for planting it on us at the Shaftesbury Theatre, where it just droops. For what is a musical comedy without pretty dresses, without catchwords, clowning, or back-chat—without even that elusive something which is still (we believe) called "pep," and which we have surely a right to expect in New York favourites? We should perhaps be grateful that the cast all sing and act pleasantly enough, and that Miss Kitty Reidy is charming as the spitfire heroine. The part of Gabrielle, a rejected village swain, can have no conceivable *raison d'être* but buffoonery, yet all the fun in the part is put there by Mr. Mark Daly, and that is very little; while Mr. Thomas Weguelin finds his rôle of "legal eagle" uncommon heavy-going. Indeed, we feel even sorrier for the actors than for ourselves. They have to sing such foolish songs, and wear such unbecoming clothes, that we can only gape at their lively endeavours to appear bright. But "Wildflower" has nothing to commend it as an entertainment except one good tune (even this wilts under its depressive treatment by chorus and orchestra), and a plump grey donkey who wears red morocco harness, and who won't go—thereby prefiguring the fate of the play.

\* \* \*

The informal debate on "Exiles," arranged by the Stage Society on Thursday, 18th, revealed what it is most people go to the theatre for. They want to see played out before them some life about which they can gossip, involving some personal problem they can discuss. They think in simple terms of selfishness and unselfishness, happiness and unhappiness: the more puzzled they are the better they are pleased. Those who discussed the play on its technical side rightly pointed out that it was too rich and confused in themes, but most speakers, the producer included, liked it for the same reasons that they do a novel. Mr. Harold Laski, unfortunately, refused to attack the aesthetic failure; he contented himself with saying that as a play it would not do, but he momentarily raised the debate to a higher level by considering its symbolic aspect (its metaphysic was his own word), very charmingly illustrating his thesis with reference to Plato's "Symposium." Mr. L. E. Neal contributed some good remarks on the hypnotic side of Richard Rowan's character, while Mr. Rupert Harvey, who had played the part, showed by his remarks how well he had understood the *portée* of the play and its characters. Whenever one goes to see him

act in the future, one will be certain beforehand of a part intellectually conceived and passionately played.

\* \* \*

Mr. Sickert's exhibition of drawings at the Savile Gallery includes about sixty drawings of many periods and many kinds—pen and ink, pencil, chalk, colour-wash, on white and coloured paper, many of which have been used as notes from which oil-paintings have afterwards been made. Mr. Sickert, in spite of his literary preoccupation with the dramatic, the sordid, the intimate in domestic life, although in a sense he makes "every picture tell a story," and fills both his drawings and his witty titles with allusion and suggestion, yet remains always a true artist, creates every picture, not as an illustration, but for its own intrinsic, vital interest as an arrangement of lines and masses and carefully balanced forms. His line, whether, as sometimes, strong, almost violent, or languid and scarcely visible, is sensitive always, intense, and economical. One of his most pleasing characteristics is his complete emotional detachment from his subject: he can portray the most distressing, the most pathetic or unpleasant scenes with a sublime absence of sentimentality and personal comment. In the Exhibition Room of the Prints and Drawings Department at the British Museum there is a very interesting collection of drawings by Claude. These are mostly landscapes in deep brown and grey wash: there are some magnificent studies of clumps of trees and foliage.

\* \* \*

Apropos to Mr. Woolf's plea for a poetical moratorium, an occasional contributor of verse to these columns sends me the following:

*Lines Written in Dejection after Reading  
a Modern Sonnet.*

Now Poets throng with such a crush  
The fairways of the air,  
We must dismount from Pegasus  
And trudge on Shanks's mare.

S. O.

\* \* \*

I am told that the James G. R. Forlong Lectures at the School of Oriental Studies are of more than ordinary interest. One course is of four lectures on Persian Archaeology by Professor Ernst Herzfeld, who has made some thrilling discoveries in Persia. The other series consists of five lectures on Chinese Religion, Art, and Drama, by Professor Basil M. Alexeiev, of Leningrad. The lectures are at 5.15, and are illustrated by lantern slides. No tickets are required.

\* \* \*

Things to see or hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, February 27.—Elgar's "Dream of Gerontius," Royal Choral Society, at 2.30, at Albert Hall.  
Isabel Gray, Piano Recital, at 3, at Wigmore Hall.  
Audrey Chapman Orchestra, at 3, at Victoria and Albert Museum.

Sunday, February 28.—Gerald Bullett's "Mr. Godley Beside Himself," at 8, at Lyric, Hammersmith (300 Club).

Ian Rankin's "A Place in the Shade," Repertory Players, at the Regent.

Professor Julian Huxley on "Birth Control," at 3.30, at Guildhouse, Eccleston Square.

Monday, March 1.—"As You Like It," at the Old Vic.  
Tuesday, March 2.—M. Henri Bernstein's "Le Voleur" (matinée), at the Savoy.

Anne Thursfield, Lieder Recital, at 8.45, at Chenil Galleries.

Wednesday, March 3.—Mr. Shaw's "Mrs. Warren's Profession," at the Strand.  
Miss Joan Temple's "The Widow's Cruise," at the Ambassadors.

Professor Ernst Herzfeld on "Persian Archaeology," at 5.15, at School of Oriental Studies.

Thursday, March 4.—Arthur Murphy's "The Way to Keep Him," at East London College.

OMICRON.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## QUEEN VICTORIA

THE long-awaited second series of "The Letters of Queen Victoria" (Murray, two volumes, £2 12s. 6d.) have at last appeared. The first series stopped with the death of the Prince Consort in December, 1861. The correspondence contained in the new volumes belongs to the years 1862 to 1878. The editing has been done excellently by Mr. Buckle. The letters are even more interesting than those of the first series, but one curious fact emerges from them. They add nothing to our knowledge of the broad facts of history. The years 1862 to 1878 were a turning-point in European history. The great war itself was certainly conceived in that unfortunate period. Think of the mere list of events: the German-Danish war, the German-Austrian war, the Franco-German war, the fall of the Second Empire in France, the rise of Italy, the publication of "Das Capital," the Russo-Turkish war, and the Congress of Berlin. These two volumes contain the most private and confidential documents which passed between the Queen and her Ministers or her relations and fellow monarchs, and in which the most important events are discussed at immense length. No one has ever been less reticent than Queen Victoria when she got a pen in her hand. At first sight, then, it may seem remarkable that there is not a single important historical revelation in these volumes, and that they throw no new light upon the events of the past. It is not really remarkable. The main, most important facts about great historical events are known almost immediately, and within twenty-five years everything is practically always known. The delusion that there is much more to be known by those behind the scenes is fostered by those whose interest it is to increase their self-importance by being "behind the scenes"—but it is a complete delusion.

\* \* \*

As a matter of fact, if you go behind the scenes of the historical drama, all you find is the actors quarrelling or "making up." The vision which you get is of great interest, and the interest is two-fold. The main interest of these letters of Queen Victoria, for instance, is psychological. They give you a full-length portrait of the Queen, and innumerable sketches and snapshots of other famous people. They leave me with a much less pleasant impression of Victoria's character than the earlier letters did. Indeed, the extraordinary harshness of her character comes as something of a shock to one. It was always clear that she was a hard woman, and in certain ways immovably obstinate, but the degree and quality of her harshness are rather surprising. Obviously the death of her husband was a tremendous blow to her, but it really looks as if she unconsciously tried to "get her own back" upon her surroundings for the misery which had come upon her. Her own health and her own personal convenience became a positive fetish, and page after page of these letters are devoted to them. She never hesitates to use her sorrow and misfortune as a weapon for getting her way, whether in great affairs of State or in small personal matters. The tone of perpetually nagging complaint which she keeps up to Minister after Minister is really astonishing, and must have been maddening to a busy man worried by a first-class political crisis.

It is most interesting to observe her relations with the various Ministers. Only Palmerston and Disraeli succeeded in managing her, and they did it by diametrically opposite methods. Disraeli did it, as we knew already, by flattery. Palmerston showed that she was, like most obstinate people, weak. He wrote her letters which, she tells her uncle, are impertinent. They are certainly pretty stiff. When she was passionately supporting Prussia against Denmark in 1863, he writes to her:—

"Viscount Palmerston can quite understand your Majesty's reluctance to take any active part in measures in any conflict against Germany, but he is sure that your Majesty will never forget that you are Sovereign of Great Britain, and that the honour of your Majesty's Crown and the interest of your Majesty's Dominions will always be the guide of your Majesty's conduct, as they must always be of your Majesty's responsible advisers. The Minor States of Germany are entitled to every just consideration, but they have no exclusive privilege of violence, injustice, perfidy, and wrong."

The tone of Viscount Palmerston's letter was attributed by the Queen's entourage "to a painful fit of the gout"; Queen Victoria's answer is astonishingly meek. Four months later, when the Queen objects to a recommendation of Doctor Jeune by the Prime Minister for a bishopric, Palmerston gives her a tremendous talking to, and the Queen submits instantly.

\* \* \*

Intellectually the Queen was limited. Up to a point she had a capable and obstinate brain. She could understand the immediate aspects of a political problem, and often seized upon some really important point and pressed her view upon Ministers with obstinate ability. But it is clear that her judgment was much too much influenced by personal considerations. The history of the Schleswig-Holstein war, the Franco-Prussian war, and the Russo-Turkish war show that her pacifism and bellicosity were determined largely by family considerations.

\* \* \*

Though the letters contain no historical revelations, they are of great interest from the historical as well as from the psychological view. They help one to dot the "i" and cross the "t" in history. They allow one to breathe again the historical atmosphere in which the "upper classes" lived in the middle of last century. I have room for but one example. The letters of Palmerston and the Queen on Garibaldi's visit to London, when he stayed with the Duke of Sutherland at Stafford House, are illuminating. "It has been very useful," writes Palmerston, "that General Garibaldi has been taken up by the aristocracy, and has not been left in the hands of agitators who would have endeavoured to use him for their own purposes. . . ." The Queen herself was very angry that Garibaldi should have received "honours usually reserved for Royalty," and did not see what a clever game the British aristocracy was playing. It is interesting to read about the same facts in Vol. V. of "The Memoirs of Alexander Herzen," translated by Mrs. Garnett (Chatto & Windus, 3s. 6d.), which has just been published. Herzen, who was then in London and went to see Garibaldi at Stafford House, saw the manœuvre from the other side—and appreciated its cleverness.

LEONARD WOOLF.

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## REVIEWS

PARNELL

**Parnell, the Last Five Years.** Told from Within by Sir ALFRED ROBBINS. (Thornton Butterworth. 10s. 6d.)

MYSTERY-MEN are always sure of receiving literary attention; and this for reasons easy of discovery; and as mystery-men in our sober, drab-coloured British Parliament are *rarae aves in terris*, we may be sure that the character, so inexplicable, of Charles Stewart Parnell, his career, so unlike everybody else's, and the tragedy of his fall from kingly power, will excite, for years to come, the abiding interest of those curious readers the drums of whose ears have not been broken by the ceaseless roar of fiction.

After the same fashion, though in a very different mode, Disraeli still holds the field against the fading figures of his Parliamentary contemporaries, whilst a third mystery-man—the Prince Louis Napoleon, once the butt and the scorn of all well-read publicists—is now being made the subject of the fascinating volumes of the Rev. J. T. Simpson.

Most of us, apparently, are of the same opinion as the small boy who, when asked by a staid middle-aged provincial librarian what books he liked best to read, replied gravely, "Mostly those with a deep plot and mystery about them."

It is not to be supposed that it matters anything to a man after his death what kind of a biographer fate may have allotted to him; and if the biographee is a wise man, he will never, whilst living, give the gloomy subject a thought. In Parnell's case there would have been no room for grumbling, for his biography by his faithful friend, the late Barry O'Brien, is an honest piece of enduring work, not likely to be superseded, however much literature of a kind is accumulated round the name of the once "uncrowned king" of Ireland.

At this particular moment, *in tempore Baldwini*, when England, as her wont has always been, after having talked consummate nonsense about Ireland for several centuries, has thought fit to forget all about her, it may be thought that the last of the great Parliamentary leaders of the Irish Revolt is rather "out of the picture."

It has been argued that it is a proof of England's Imperial greatness that she always "cuts her losses," with the easy assurance of John Bunyan's "Mr. Badman." We have, for example, quite forgotten that once upon a time our king owned half France, or that down to the Tudors the City of Calais sent a member to our House of Commons; and when, at a much later day, after having incurred heavy debts in defending our American Colonists from the French, and foolishly persisted in trying to tax our fellow-subjects to help to pay the bill, we lost our American possessions, we took the defeat quite composedly; and when the loyalists, ejected from their colonial properties, returned to the old home, we snubbed them severely, and made it plain that we did not care to see their ugly faces or to listen to their incessant grumblings against their harsh fate.

How many of the visitors to our wonderful Abbey Church of Westminster, when they stare vacantly at Chantrey's fine statue of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, remember that the glorious island of Java ("that other India") was once ours for five years? All we remember of Raffles is that he had something to do with our "Zoo."

And so it is with Ireland. She has gone—let her go!—so you may hear it said every day in the Underground Railway and the Tube.

But though we may have lost our interest in Ireland, lovers of history, and especially of irony (and the taste for irony grows daily amongst the young), will not forget Parnell in a hurry; for in the story of his demand for Home Rule, read, as it now can be, by the light of what has happened since Parnell's death—the young reader, born it may be ten years after that event, will find such food for his irony as no other chapter of English and Irish history can supply him with.

One single passage from a speech made in Dublin by Mr. Parnell in 1885, will illustrate this irony, at all events to the initiated. "It is admitted by all parties that you have brought the question of Irish legislative independence to the point of solution. It is not now a question of self-govern-

ment for Ireland; it is only a question as to how much of the self-government they will be able to cheat us out of."

For more than thirty wasted, wrangling years, this was the question contested in Parliament—How much self-government or how little? The young ironical reader of Mr. Barry O'Brien's Life will have no difficulty in estimating how much was given to Mr. Cosgrave, and how much was refused to Mr. Parnell.

The best description of Mr. Parnell as an Irish Parliamentary leader that we have ever come across is from the pen of a French journalist, and it is a description, not of Parnell, but in 1852 of Louis Napoleon:

"The President is a superior man, but his superiority is of the sort that is hidden under a dubious exterior; his life is entirely internal; his speech does not betray his inspiration; his gesture does not copy his audacity; his look does not reflect his ardour; his step does not reveal his resolution; his whole mental nature is in some sort repressed by his physical; he thinks and does not discuss; he decides and does not deliberate; he acts without agitation, he speaks and assigns no reason; his best friends are unacquainted with him; he obtains their confidence but never asks it." (M. de Guerronnier in the *PAYS*, quoted in Bagot's "Letters on the French Coup d'Etat.")

How far this describes the third Napoleon we cannot say, but it is the very Parnell as we saw and heard him in the House of Commons in 1889-90.

As for the latest book on Parnell, we have little to say about it. Like all books dealing with Parnell, it is worth reading, for the cross-lights it may chance to throw over his character and for such information about him as it contains; but it is not a book after our mind, for it bears on every page the trail of the Lobby of the House of Commons.

Sir Alfred Robbins, a man of indisputable honour, tells us that he first became a nightly frequenter of the Lobby in February, 1889, as the correspondent of an influential provincial anti-Irish newspaper, the *BIRMINGHAM POST*. An introduction to Mr. Parnell speedily followed, and Sir Alfred assures us that he at once formed a very high opinion of the Irish leader, being attracted by his friendly demeanour and straightforward bearing.

All purveyors of men's primal necessities, whether meat, drink, or gossip, occupy positions of grave moral danger, and a purveyor of news runs perhaps more danger than any of the others.

On page 23, Sir Alfred, with Rousseau-like frankness, tells the following story against himself:—

"I one night was assured by a high Unionist authority that the determining influence to induce a wavering Cabinet to bring in the Bill (to establish the Parnell Commission) was the discovery of the counterfoil of a cheque, signed by Mr. Parnell, for the purchase of the knives with which were perpetrated the Phoenix Park murders. Accepting the authority as absolute, I risked the statement. The following afternoon Parnell, in the Lobby, with a quiet anger that deeply thrilled, denounced the assertion as wickedly baseless, stating circumstances which proved it to be so, and he said he would at once proceed against the *BIRMINGHAM POST* for criminal libel, unless he had the name of my informant."

This piece of information the purveyor refused to give, but assured Mr. Parnell that it was not Mr. Chamberlain. Parnell then said:—

"I fully trust you. If it weren't for that, I would go ahead at once. Say it isn't true and I'll be satisfied. But next time you hear me charged—give me a chance before publishing."

In this fearful story we see revealed the dual ownership of the conscience of a purveyor of news. On the one hand, there was his duty towards a public man who had admitted him into his confidence and in whose honour he believed, and on the other hand was his duty towards his newspaper avid for the latest bit of "news." The charge itself is too frightful even to consider. Had it been true, Parnell was a cowardly ruffian, far worse than the actual murderers of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. Here was a dilemma. "The authority was accepted," and the lie circulated. Parnell apparently was not so much surprised as we are. After telling this story Sir Alfred adds these words:—

"It only remains to be observed, on the general question, that in spite of many difficulties, I stood firmly throughout my journalistic career of half-a-century to the rule stated by Parnell."

What, we are disposed to ask, is "the general question" to which this experienced journalist refers?

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No fresh light is thrown upon a point which we dare say it is better should remain in darkness. How did it come about that Captain O'Shea, that most patient of cuckolds, who had been content to sit in Parliament as Parnell's nominee for Galway, was induced at last to file his petition in the Divorce Court that ruined Parnell.

Ireland might easily have forgiven her chief if he had been dimly cognisant of murder, but for him to live for years on terms of love and romantic friendship with another man's wife, and worst of all, to marry her afterwards, was an unpardonable sin in Irish eyes.

So far as Ireland is concerned it is all over now. There is nothing left but the irony. Ireland has now two Parliaments; the Act of Union has been repealed by Unionists; over three-fourths of the land there is practically an independent Republic with its own postage stamps, and soon its own token-coins! More than Parnell ever asked for has been accomplished, but, as Heine somewhere sorrowfully sings:—

"But do not, do not, ask me how?"

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

#### MARY MACARTHUR

**Mary Macarthur: a Biographical Sketch.** By MARY AGNES HAMILTON. (Parsons, 3s. 6d.)

MRS. HAMILTON deserves gratitude for preserving in this little book, written with insight and affection, the memory of the most remarkable woman produced by the "Labour" movement in this country. No better summary could have been chosen than the quotation from Carlyle on the title-page: "You could see, here looked forth, a soul which was winged; which dwelt in hope and action, not in hesitation or fear." It is the description of, and a tribute to, a personality, far more than any definite record of achievement. Mary Macarthur came from a comfortable middle-class home. Her father was the head of a big West-end drapery business in Glasgow. He was strongly Conservative in politics and of Highland ancestry. And it is this Highland ancestry that most impressed those who had become friends of his brilliant daughter. Estrangement came, when she passed from the "respectabilities," first to the Shop Assistants' Union and then into the Women's Trade Union movement, but later came reconciliation and acceptance.

I first came to know her through the Christian Social Union and Miss Gertrude Tuckwell, when working on the same lines as herself in the agitation that brought the Anti-Sweating Act and the Shop Hours Acts. She was, and continued to be through a comparatively short life, a wild and fascinating creature, taking up every kind of experiment, such as living on one meal a day, or vegetarianism; she was "a slip of a girl" wearing out her life in organizing the ever-crumbing unions of work-girls in jam and pickle factories at Bermondsey and elsewhere, who, under her influence, would break into random strikes and then, for inexplicable reasons, go to pieces again, abandon the cause, cease to be members of the Trades Unions formed so passionately a few months before. Only the most welcome sense of humour, a strong will, and the unchanging affection of her friends kept that flaming spirit alive without despair through so many difficult days. She never possessed "class consciousness." She had sufficient confidence in herself to know that her fight for the dispossessed would not be modified by the fact that she was a welcome speaker at drawing-room meetings in great houses, and that on the Queen's Fund, initiated at the beginning of the War, for providing work for women, she became an intimate friend and was trusted by the Queen herself, and moved quite easily among Court functions and flummuries. She also possessed a glorious sincerity, sometimes finding devastating expression. I remember, in a Prince of Wales's Committee

on which we sat together, on questions on which we disagreed, I would find notes passed to me across the table, such as: "Once again you have betrayed the cause." Such oral or written amenities, however, never made the slightest difference to our friendship. But by sincerity she judged men and women, and was defiant and unrestrained in her condemnations. She hated Mr. Ramsay MacDonald for some reason I could never find out in conversation, as he was then my intimate friend. She despised with inflection of vocal contempt a well-meaning gentleman whom she called "Uncle Arthur." Her comments on some members of the Prince of Wales's Fund were often more clear than complimentary. Her two great heroes were Keir Hardie and "Bob" Smillie, both Scotch and both defiantly sincere. And, of course, at the end Mr. "Willie" Anderson, whom she kept waiting for marriage as long as Jacob was kept waiting for Rachel, but with whom at the end she formed a perfect union, only shattered after too brief companionship by the merciless hand of death. From that death she never recovered. She sought in all the spiritualisms and mechanisms of her day communication with her dead husband. But her Highland willingness to believe even some very remarkable coincidences was always countered by that plain refusal to accept anything but fact which she probably inherited from her Aberdonian mother. She had stood for Parliament in 1918, a few weeks before he died. But, unfortunately, she chose the constituency of a very popular member of many years' standing. It will always be a regret that she was not the first woman member of the House of Commons, for no one had better earned the right to be so.

She was never a feminist; believing it to be a middle-class movement, little concerned with the realities of the welfare of poor working-class women, and, though intellectually approving of votes being given to women, I know she distrusted the economic effect as reflected in political action. She knew how many decades were required before the bulk of the women she was endeavouring to organize would become consistently faithful to the causes she had at heart. She was never a "pacifist," in the sense that she thought we could have stood out of the war when it came. After negotiations with Sir Robert Morant on Insurance, she would drift into my rooms at Wellington House for a cup of tea and a talk, and, although oppressed and tormented by the gigantic slaughter happening in Europe, I never heard her support the theory that on the invasion of Belgium we could do other than what we did. Through all the troublous years of war-time her work was almost entirely concentrated on the maintenance of the standard of the women and girls who in hundreds of thousands were being drawn into industry unconscious of their rights, in law or equity, in so tremendous a change. In her election address she looked forward to a time "when women shall be quite free to join the men in the gigantic task of rebuilding the world that lies in ruins. And may the foundations of the new world be laid in justice and equity, and may it be more wisely built than was the old." After her husband's death she went on working, speaking in America at vast meetings for peace, and maintaining that "the evil of war is that it destroys the soul of people and peoples." The end was a tragedy. She died on New Year's Day, 1921, a few days before her fortieth year, with possibilities of influence and even position in government unfulfilled. She had many deficiencies, little reading, a naive appreciation of beauty, with music "a sealed book to her," and in literature, as Mrs. Hamilton says, "her judgments were erratic to the last degree," caring "for as many bad poems and poets as good, and winding up a fine speech with quatrains of doggerel." She talked very little about Socialism. She lived in a continual whirl of hard work, involving every kind of discomfort and fatigue. Yet she had a high sense of humour, and conversation with her was always stimulating. Her last letter concerning the child, who is all that is left of two remarkable personalities, reveals that essential content which comes more from blessedness than happiness, beneath all the chaos of life's fitful fever: "I cannot think of a greater happiness to wish my own child than that she should, like me, be enabled to spend herself fully and freely in the cause of an ideal in which she believes."

C. F. G. MASTERMAN.

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## THE ETHICS OF DRAMATISTS

**The Ethical and Religious Value of the Drama.** By RAMSDEN BALMFORTH. (Allen & Unwin. 7s. 6d.)

It is a commonplace of criticism that the origin of drama is religion, but much depends upon what is meant by "religion." To some people the word is perhaps more suggestive of magical practices than of ethics. The Rev. Ramsden Balmforth, who writes on the ethical and religious value of the drama, sees sermons in plays and good in *Æschylus*, *Job* and *Lear*, *Prometheus* and Mr. Shaw's *Joan, Ibsen* and *Shelley*, provide him with an astonishing number of opportunities for ethical remarks and exhortations. Mr. Balmforth is acutely conscious of the existence of Evil and of the necessity for Good; he is zealous and very much in earnest; he has no art sense, but possesses that helpful moral instinct which is such an excellent substitute. He is much preoccupied with the problem of "Why do the good suffer?"—and, indeed, seems to hold that this is "the problem with which the drama deals." There is, of course, some danger in this exclusively ethical interpretation of the drama. As Mr. J. M. Robertson has pointed out, we might find ourselves admiring "*Hamlet*" for its moral, i.e., that one should always kill one's uncle, and as quickly as possible. Mr. Balmforth is careful to lose no opportunity for a moral reflection. Thus, after quoting *Job*, "The thing which I feared hath come upon me," he remarks appositely:—

"How many thousands of men and women, when the doctor has pronounced the word cancer, or tuberculosis, or locomotor ataxy, have given utterance to the same thoughts!"

For it is certainly a very agonizing theological difficulty to explain why the theologically innocent should suffer, since God is both omnipotent and good, and it is illogical to suppose that he would favour his adherents less than those who are hostile or indifferent. Why did the long-range shell fall on the congregation during Mass in Paris instead of on one of the neighbouring brothels?—accepting the English assumption that there is a brothel in every street in Paris. The answer, as Mr. Balmforth complains in the case of *Job*, is "inconclusive and unsatisfying."

The nineteenth century is, however, more satisfactory. There is *Shelley*, for instance. He does not answer "the problem, for the simple reason that it cannot be answered here"; but on the other hand, "he saw the spirit of Eternal Love." Mr. Balmforth is enthusiastic about this spirit, but not wholly clear, though he commits himself to the definition of it as "an active principle working in men's hearts, and, by the splendour of its sacrifices, producing its natural reactions in the hearts of the spiritually blind and the ignorantly wicked." One may confess some coolness towards the subject of eternal love. It is indiscriminate, loving everything and everybody, and that, as Mr. D. H. Lawrence passionately protests, is indecent; and then it sounds so dreadfully permanent. But Mr. Balmforth is most enthusiastic about eternal love and believes it will prevent future wars. Let us hope it may prove so in the event.

From *Shelley*, Mr. Balmforth proceeds to *Ibsen*, to Tolstoi, to Mr. Shaw, Mr. Galsworthy, and Mr. Hardy. From Brand we learn a lesson—"Be true to thyself—thou, who art a part of God's spirit. But be sure it is thy highest self." Tolstoi and *Ibsen* provoke a reflection on heredity and environment:—

". . . Shakespeare, with all his splendid spiritual endowments, would have spent his life to little purpose had he been immured for life in a prison or a coal-mine, or been otherwise shut off from an appropriate environment. On the other hand, a mentally deficient person, or even an ordinary individual, would never have attained Shakespeare's genius even if he had had ten times the education and opportunities which Shakespeare had."

Flaubert would have loved that; it would have gone pat into his collection. Thus Mr. Balmforth proceeds, culling great thoughts from his selected dramatists and recording those they have inspired in him. As he frankly admits, he does not get far towards a solution of the "problem of drama," but he does feel that the nineteenth-century dramatists he admires are very helpful in the matter of salvation. The world has obviously got to be saved, as Mr. Balmforth perceives, and he thinks the stage may be of great assistance; for, as he remarks in his preface, "the drama is coming into its own."

## THE OLD VIC

**The Old Vic.** By LILIAN BAYLIS and CICELY HAMILTON. (Cape. 12s. 6d.)

"THE public, such is their hunger for real entertainment, will go anywhere and submit to any inconvenience, in order to obtain it," says Mr. Arnold Bennett; and it is true that to see a good play well acted we must often go out to Hammersmith, Barnes, or Hampstead. These are the theatres with character; for, as Miss Hamilton explains in her absorbing biography of the Old Vic, a suburban house must provide some excellent novelty if it is to win more than local fame. For West-enders can only be lured there, away from their own comfortable theatres, by an entertainment that can make them forget the annoyance of their journey and, sometimes, the hardness of their seats.

In some outlying theatres the unusual surroundings and audience are an entertainment in themselves. We know one, for instance, not yet discovered by the West-end, which owes half its charm to the naive and spontaneous reaction of its audience. But the Old Vic is probably the only London theatre which appeals constantly to that genuine desire for good stuff which is common to Lambeth, Bloomsbury and Mayfair. We cross the river again and again simply to enjoy Shakespeare's plays, in company with local enthusiasts who are there for the same purpose. For Miss Hamilton is right,—"this is not a freak public—the Vic is by far too large for a freak theatre. All the highbrows in London (there are not many of them) could not fill it for more than a night or two"; but it is a theatre of character, that "stands for Shakespeare and opera made interesting to the man in the street"—be it Curzon Street or the New Cut.

"Waterloo Bridge," says Miss Hamilton, "was the Vic's first cause"; but even across the new bridge, a visit to this Coburg theatre was a serious undertaking in 1816. In addition, therefore, to the wonders of "a superb central lustre," and "a grand panoramic marine saloon, designed and executed by Mr. Serres (Marine Painter to His Majesty)," the manager had to promise that "extra Patroles are engaged for the Bridge and Roads leading to the Theatre," and that "particular attention will be paid to lighting the same." The theatre played (but always at a loss) burlettas, melodramas, and variety turns; nor did it forget Shakespeare, but played from time to time those curious happy-ended dramas that passed for his tragedies a hundred years ago. It is difficult to envisage these abortions on the stage, and we suggest that the Phoenix Society might one Sunday help our imaginations by reviving Colley Cibber's "*Richard III.*," or Nahum Tate's "*Lear.*" But even these versions should not have been played at the Vic, for they encroached on the monopoly of legitimate drama enjoyed by Drury Lane and Covent Garden; and other theatres could, before 1843, legally only act Shakespeare dished up as a burletta!

The theatre passed through varying fortunes; Kean, Macready, and Booth graced its boards, and Paganini gave there his farewell exhibition of acrobatics on the violin; but by the middle of the century it had settled down to a tradition of full-blooded melodrama. By this time it had come into disrepute, and mid-Victorian moralists denounced it as "a licensed pit of darkness and trap of temptation," and "the focus of every form of vice." Happily there was one reformer who was not content to denounce inactively its wickedness; and just as the Coburg's first cause was Waterloo Bridge, so the Old Vic's new beginning may be traced to the black-eyes of its habitués, which offended a valiant little lady called Miss Emma Cons. She had worked at illuminating manuscripts for Ruskin, and at rent-collecting with Miss Octavia Hill, and she now applied her zeal for beauty and temperance to the work of regenerating the Vic. Her object was to make of it a coffee-music-hall, where working men could take their families, and enjoy with them a decent and attractive entertainment; and she succeeded so triumphantly that it became this and much more besides. Her work for the Old Vic makes a heartening story, which is vividly told in a chapter by Miss Lilian Baylis, her niece and successor, who has made the Vic what it is to-day—"a theatre of clear-cut aims and traditions; a theatre of character, and a pioneer worker in the garden of poetry and music."

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## MONETARY STABILITY

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WILLIAM JAMES is reported to have said that psychology was a nasty little subject. The modern economist may be pardoned for feeling the same about money. It is a superficial subject, a mere question of machinery; it is not one of the fundamental problems of economic life at all, nor, though technical, is it a subject of very profound difficulty. Moreover, more is known about it and more data are available for the study of it than is the case with any other branch of economic science, and yet the controversy between sound money men and others becomes no less bitter, and the practical man, politician or banker, seems to be nearly as much guided by rule-of-thumb, past tradition, and popular theories about the psychology of the business world as in the days when the directors of the Bank of England, by formal resolution, repudiated the principles of the Bullion Report.

Mr. Bellerby, assuming that we are all agreed in principle that the stabilization of prices is desirable, describes the policy by which the issue of bank credit should be controlled to secure this end and the practical steps necessary for success. At the same time, he points out—and this is perhaps the most important thing in the book—that the general return to the gold or gold exchange standard, now in favour, while it is not incompatible with the regulation of credit issues in accordance with an index of general prices so as to secure a stable price-level, brings forces into play which will constantly be working to break down such a policy. "The gold situation will tend to demand, first a compromise with price stability, and then, in course of time, it may establish once again complete supremacy." To restore the pre-war currency system is to restore also the state of mind among bankers which regards the size of the gold reserve as the proper regulator of credit. Thus two criteria will constantly be at work, and it is difficult to believe that old habits will not prevail. But, of course, the stabilization of prices means that the value of money will be prevented from fluctuating with changes in the value of gold; in other words, that we shall not be on a gold standard. To try and combine the two, as Mr. Bellerby assumes must be done, merely means trying to gull people into the belief that the gold standard is being maintained, while carrying on a different system behind their backs. It appears unlikely that this will work. Monetary reform, like other reform, must come by convincing people of its importance.

Mr. Bellerby's book is an attempt to do something of the kind. It is rather a piece of scientific propaganda than an original contribution to knowledge. The pity is that his general method of approach leads him to traverse rapidly a great deal of rather familiar ground, so that the argument, while not explanatory enough for the novice, has something the air of a repetition of commonplaces to anyone already acquainted with the subject. He has, however, some important points to make. Two systems of price-stability are defined—one in which a definite level of prices is selected as normal and the existing price-level kept within a very small range of it. The other would merely check fluctuations in prices which appeared to be having injurious effects on the smooth course of industry without regard to what happened to the general price-level in the long run. To each of these he applies six tests—ease of application, effect on total consumption, relation to current ideas of social justice (of which he, surprisingly, takes the right to property to be the most important), influence on social and industrial relations, expediency in relation to international co-operation, and expediency in connection with the gold or gold exchange standards. He decides in favour of the first of these systems mainly on the results of the last four tests. It would have been satisfactory to have had more on the difficulties of this "fixed price normal" conception; it is not easy, for instance, to compile an index-number which really represents the general level of prices over a long period of time. One obvious difficulty is that new commodities get invented and produced which have to be incorporated in some way. The book concludes with two appendices, one on the international agreements necessary to secure price stability under the gold or gold exchange standard, and one comparing gold and non-metallic exchange standards.

J. E. N.

## MAN'S-EYE VIEW OF BURMA

**Burma as I Saw It (1889-1917.)** By R. GRANT BROWN. (Methuen. 15s.)

MR. GRANT BROWN fails to qualify as a writer of the gossipy, glamour-sodden book of Eastern travel. He did not make a journey to Burma in order to write a book about it. By no stretch of a libellous imagination could his book be called "Myself on a Burmese Background." On the contrary, Mr. Brown went about Burma for thirty years on his lawful occasions as an Indian Civil Servant, and, having in that time learnt something of the country, has now chosen to write a book which contains little except information he has himself collected and opinions he has himself formed. This is uncompromising, and even, at first sight, a little ominous. We are as far removed as may be from the purple patch. But it is evidently one good way of writing a description of a foreign—and particularly an Eastern—country; and Mr. Brown has made an excellent job of it. He has a natural liking for unadorned facts, and knows how to impart them without fatiguing either himself or his reader. Moreover, his masculine, racy, and unpretentious style, which enables him to take an anecdote in his stride without fussing, exactly fits the unforced temper of his narrative. Witness his way with the anopheline mosquito. Anyone who enters Burma without realizing that this criminal insect is in a sense its most important inhabitant will not be long in regretting it. Mr. Brown warns the traveller by writing an admirable précis of the malaria-carrying habits of the anopheline, adds a description of what in his experience is the most efficacious dose of quinine, enlivens the page with an anecdote, and passes on without giving the insect a chance to buzz in his bonnet. At this pitch of economy much ground can be covered in a few pages, and in less than three hundred Mr. Brown accomplishes a valuable survey of Burmese life, while leaving himself space to relax in two chapters of personal reminiscences, of which one—an account of his menagerie—throws a humorous light equally on Mr. Brown and the comic animals which were thrust upon him.

Burma, as befits even an outlying part of the Indian Empire, has its "questions," but these are prevented, by its geographical isolation, the sparseness of population on its rich soil, and the lack of deep divisions in race, wealth, sex, or religious beliefs, from burning with true Indian fervour. It is noticeable that in most of the controversies which he mentions Mr. Brown ranges himself vigorously against the policy of the British Government. His chapter on education is an interesting statement, from one angle, of the Western problem of "enlightening a backward people" when that people has an ancient light of its own; and through all his political criticism runs the cool commonsense insistence that the Burmese can be fitted to govern themselves only by rooting their political institutions in the customs of the people.

## A FEUDAL RELIC

**Bodiam Castle, Sussex: a Historical and Descriptive Survey.** By the Marquis CURZON OF KEDLESTON, K.G. (Cape. 30s.)

BODIAM CASTLE, which stands on the borders of Kent and Sussex, though just within the latter county, is among the castles which the late Lord Curzon acquired in order to restore them and present them to the nation; and this book is one of a series of five similar monographs which he had planned and partially executed before his death. The typescript of the present volume had been completed and corrected by him, though he did not live to see the proofs. That he finished this work first may, perhaps, be taken as a further indication of his particular love for Bodiam, which he describes as "the most romantic and, notwithstanding its rather austere appearance, the most fairy of English castles":—

"Situated in a cup of the hills that sweep down to the Valley of the Rother, it is not seen from any quarter, except from the hogsback of Ewhurst on the South, until one is almost upon it. But then the spectacle of its grey and battlemented walls, with their formidable towers and fanciful machicolations, all but intact externally (since the internal damage cannot be seen until we have passed the Great Gateway and entered the Court), as they rise

## UNDERGROUND RAILWAYS

The meetings of the Proprietors of the Underground Railways were held at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Thursday, February 25th. The Rt. Hon. Lord Ashfield, P.C., in the chair.

The Chairman said: My Lords, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—The years seem to pass quickly and once more I find myself engaged in the task of explaining to you why it is that the affairs of your Companies are not so prosperous as we all could wish, and why you are still without that reasonable return upon the capital invested in these undertakings to which you are entitled. For you must have realized from the Reports and Accounts of the several Companies which have already been posted to you, and which I trust, that following our usual custom you will take at read, that once more we have experienced an unsatisfactory year. This is a disappointment for you, but a much greater one for us, who are responsible for conducting the affairs of your Companies. It is especially disappointing when, as you will have observed from the Statistical Supplement which accompanied the Reports and Accounts, in what is easily a record year, there was a gross income of over £14,000,000, out of which there remained a balance of only £825,000 available for dividends upon a total ordinary capital of £19,750,000. This result, when measured either by the capital invested in the undertakings or by the volume and importance of the work performed, provides indeed a meagre reward, and as I have already said, is discouraging to everybody concerned.

In 1921, the volume of passengers which we carried reached its lowest point in the depression consequent upon the war. They then numbered 1,100 millions. Since then they have increased year by year until this year they reached the record total of 1,555 millions, an increase of over 41 per cent. in the brief space of four years. If we turn to the estimates made for the passenger traffic of Greater London as a whole, the progress is somewhat similar though somewhat less good. Starting with the year 1921 again, there was in that year a total passenger movement by train, tram and omnibus of 2,911 millions, which grew steadily year by year to an expected total of 3,687 millions in 1925, an increase of 27 per cent. in the four years, and the equivalent of 482 rides per head of the population for that year. New York still beats us with 543 rides per head of the population.

It must seem puzzling to you that out of so vast a volume of traffic, of which your five Companies carry no less than 42 per cent., it is not possible to secure an adequate margin of income to meet the needs of the capital invested. Yet the bald fact remains that not only this group of Companies, but all the other undertakings engaged in London traffic are little content with their present financial position. Nevertheless, I grow more and more convinced, as the traffic grows in volume, that given a reasonable measure of co-operation between the various interests engaged in carrying this traffic, there can be no question but that, at the present level of fares, there is a sufficient volume of traffic already in existence to support all the traffic facilities which London needs for its adequate and comfortable movement, with some margin available for further developments.

As 1925 is better on the whole than 1924, so we may look with some certainty, in existing circumstances, to 1926 being better than 1925. At any rate, the present year starts with an improved position when compared with last year.

While the last five years have been distinguished by a considerable rise in the total volume of traffic carried, there has been throughout these years a steady drift of traffic from the railways to the omnibuses. In 1921, your railways carried 339 millions of passengers. In 1924, the number had fallen as low as 298 millions, while in 1925, in spite of their increased route mileage and improved facilities, they carried only 319 millions, or still 20 millions less than in 1921. What we need for the re-establishment of our financial position as a group of Companies is an increase in the number of passengers carried by our railways, and while there are indications in recent months of some improvement, the numbers must be greatly increased before we can regard the situation as satisfactory.

During last year the Minister of Transport, upon the advice of the London Traffic Committee, exercised the powers conferred upon him under section 7 of the London Traffic Act, 1924, and made orders which have had the effect of stereotyping the services which may be given by omnibuses upon all the main traffic routes within Greater London. This would seem a necessary step, having regard to the disturbance and impoverishment which the unrestricted competition for transport upon the streets was occasioning, not only to tramways, but also to underground railways. The effect of the orders has been to define narrowly the numbers of omnibuses which can be worked, and to leave slender scope for development. We have not, therefore,

increased our fleet appreciably during the last year, and since the commencement of the present year we have withdrawn from the fleet a considerable number of pre-war omnibuses. We have, in fact, now reduced our joint fleet from 4,335 to 4,103, a decrease of 232 vehicles, or 5.4 per cent.

If we review the position of the independent proprietors we find that at the close of 1924 there were 499 independent omnibuses licensed by the Metropolitan Police. At the close of 1925 there were 646, an increase of 147, or 29 per cent., and last week there were 662, showing a further increase, making the percentage still higher at 33. This increase was put into service at a time when Parliament had indicated its intention to establish restrictions on the number of omnibuses employed on the streets, in order to mitigate congestion and to secure, so far as that is possible, that the tramways should be self-supporting. But in spite of this avowed intention of Parliament, this large increase in the number of independently owned omnibuses has taken place. I think I am only asking what is eminently fair and equitable when I suggest that if omnibuses are to be withdrawn, those which have come on the streets at this late stage, and with full knowledge of the situation, should be the first to be entirely withdrawn, and only after this withdrawal is complete should any further measure be introduced. I think that while we must acquiesce in the decision of Parliament that some closer restriction must be made in the number of omnibuses at work, we are entitled to claim for your Company and its associates, all of whom have been established many years, and have given constant service in times of peace and unique service in times of war, some favourable consideration as against a disorganized group of small proprietors of recent origin, some of them, as we find, merely speculators. London traffic is no field for exploitation or for competition, nor, indeed, is traffic anywhere if the interests of the passengers are to be paramount; and there is no scope for anything but co-ordinated and frequent services, which call for skilled organization and large resources.

But the withdrawal of omnibuses will not in itself solve the traffic problem. I remain convinced that the establishment of the agencies employed in London traffic, on a stable and satisfactory basis, demands some wide scheme embracing both a common financial interest and a common management. The year 1925 has seen limits set to the competition of vehicles for passengers in the streets, but the competition still remains, and with its elements of unsafety and disorder, for try how you will, competition cannot be held within rigid bounds. Our staff are only human, and we can hardly blame them if, at times, they are provoked to unwise action. In a sense, the situation in which they are placed is unfair. The year 1925 has seen little or no amendment of the tramway position, and so long as one of the necessary means of transport for London rests in an impossible financial position, there cannot be quiet from partisan and even political discussion and criticism. Yet what is needed is this quiet, in which the business of transport can be pursued without disturbance, and then I am sure the business will be successful. I hope I carry you all with me when I express our goodwill and interest in this matter, and our preparedness to enter into negotiations. It would be imprudent of me to say more at this stage.

Last year we felt justified in drawing upon the amount carried forward in our accounts to sustain our dividends at the previous year's level, and although we had only £800,000 to distribute, we, in fact, distributed £875,000, reducing the amounts carried forward by £75,000 in consequence. We have not thought it wise to repeat this subtraction from our resources so we have determined upon some small modifications in the dividends which we are recommending to you for approval. In consequence, although we have earned £825,000 which we can distribute, we are actually distributing £808,000 only, and the amounts carried forward, taken collectively, are increased by £17,000. It is a conservative policy, but we suggest in your best interests.

Before closing I should perhaps venture a word about your future prospects. As I have already said, the present year starts off favourably. Each Company shows an improved position, and I am, therefore, prompted to think that when we meet again I shall be privileged to give you an encouraging account of the full year's working. You will, I am sure, expect me to be cautious in what I say. Many forecasts have been made on London Traffic with as many disappointments, and I am loth to have myself added to the list of false prophets. I should, therefore, only add that the signs are favourable and, given a fair chance, given industrial peace, given a cautious pursuit of present policies, there will, I hope, at the close of the year be some reward for your forbearance and patience over a longer period than I care to recall.

The resolutions were carried unanimously.

proudly from the bosom of a lily-decked moat, so large as to be almost a lake—is unequalled for picturesque beauty among the castles of our own or almost any other country."

Bodiam was the first English castle to be built in the Perpendicular style. Dating from the latter part of the fourteenth century, it represents the end of the great castle-building age, and, as it is clear that its first occupiers, the Dalyngrigge family, "though they lived behind frowning walls which seemed both to contemplate and to defy attack from without, were by no means indifferent to considerations of comfort," it may be said to mark the first stage of transition between the castle as a mere fortress and as a gentleman's country residence. Security and defence were still, however, the main thoughts which inspired its builders; and, sad though the ruin of it has been, there is no castle which "gives a more vivid idea of what the fortified stronghold of an English Knight was like in the closing days of the Plantagenet era."

When Lord Curzon bought Bodiam in 1917, he not only studied all the available records of it, but carried out elaborate excavations and research. Certain phases of its history still remain matters for conjecture. Many theories, for instance, have been advanced as to how and when the interior was almost completely destroyed, and, though Lord Curzon holds to the view that its spoliation dates from the Civil War, he makes no claim to certainty. On the whole, however, he has been able not merely to give us a detailed and fascinating description of every feature of the Castle as it was in its prime, but to piece together with convincing skill its characteristic, if undramatic, story. The book, admirably produced and illustrated, is written with a grace and humour which may cause some readers to regret that the author did not find in archaeology, rather than in politics, the main outlet for his love of feudalism.

## ON THE EDITOR'S TABLE

THE Oxford University Press publish in two volumes a new edition of Tavernier's "Travels in India," translated by V. Ball, edited by William Crooke (18s.). "Sahara," by Angus Buchanan (Murray, 21s.), is a travel book which has some more than usually beautiful photographs. Other travel books are: "On the Roof of the Rockies," by Lewis R. Freeman (Heinemann, 25s.); "Vanishing Trails, Ten Years of a Wanderer's Life," by Harrison Dale (Black, 5s.), which tells of India, Arabia, the Far East, and many other places; "Among the Bantu Nomads," by J. T. Brown (Seeley, Service, 21s.); "In Unknown New Guinea," by W. J. V. Saville (Seeley, Service, 21s.). "The Bay of Naples," by Mrs. Steuart Erskine, illustrated by Major Benton Fletcher, is a new volume in Messrs. A. & C. Black's well-known series (7s. 6d.).

Among historical books the following should be noted: "Lanfranc, a Study of his Life and Writing," by A. J. Macdonald (Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.), and "Home Life under the Stuarts," by Elizabeth Godfrey (Stanley Paul, 12s. 6d.).

"Beowulf," translated into modern English rhyming verse by Archibald Strong (Constable, 12s.), contains an introduction and notes by the translator and a foreword by Professor R. W. Chambers.

"Mrs. Delany at Court and among the Wits," edited by R. Brimley Johnson (Stanley Paul, 16s.), consists mainly of Mrs. Delany's autobiography and correspondence. Two books of reminiscences are "Life's Fitful Fever," by Margaret Wynne Nevinson (A. & C. Black, 15s.), and "Camp and Society," by Colonel Hugh M. Sinclair (Chapman & Hall, 18s.).

In "Manners and Tone of Good Society" (A. & C. Black, 5s.) the Hon. Mrs. Dowdall gives good advice on behaviour in polite society.

## INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE BOOKS

**A Dictionary of European Literature.** By LAURIE MAGNUS. (Routledge, 25s.)

**Europa Year Book, 1926.** Edited by MICHAEL FARBMAN, RAMSAY MUIR, and HUGH F. SPENDER. (Routledge, 15s.)

THE difficulties of compiling international works of reference are obvious, and most people have experienced, at one time or another, the labour and research which is too often necessary in order to obtain some small piece of information about a foreign country. These two books, therefore, are most welcome. Mr. Magnus's dictionary is a remarkable achievement. It contains short critical and biographical paragraphs on major and minor writers of all the European countries from the twelfth to the twentieth centuries, the only living writers included being Mr. Hardy and Georg Brandes. It includes summaries of the literary history of various countries, articles on movements and topics, e.g., classicism and the novel, and paragraphs on certain books. Mr. Magnus has wisely included English literature and English writers. So far as fortuitous dipping into the book can show, the plan has been admirably executed. The paragraphs are brief, clear, and accurate, and give precisely the kind of information that a student of European literature would be likely to require.

The "Europa Year-Book" is an even more ambitious undertaking. It sets out to give a survey of European politics, economics, science, art, and literature; a European "Who's Who" and directory; statistical abstracts, and a review of current European history. The book begins with a European survey in the form of many admirable articles by distinguished writers and experts. For instance, Mr. Wells writes on the reconstruction of world affairs, Mr. Ramsay Muir on the signs of a new era, Herr H. von Gerlach on Germany and Poland, M. Loucheur on the economic situation in France, Meier-Graefe on Art. The remainder of the book is more severely a book of reference, consisting of facts and statistics with regard to the various countries. The amount of information given is remarkable, and its arrangement is good. The whole work should, in fact, be useful to a large number of different people. We hope, however, that in a subsequent edition steps will be taken to make it more accurate. Haphazard testing reveals a large number of errors. Most of those which we have discovered could easily be eliminated by a more careful checking of names and reading of proofs, e.g., Sir Sidney Lee, T. S. Sargent for J. S. Sargent, Pearsall Lozon Smith for Logan Pearsall Smith.

## NOVELS IN BRIEF

**The Fulfilment of Daphne Bruno.** By ERNEST RAYMOND. (Cassell, 7s. 6d.)

In spite of an unabated lack of reticence and much too hasty an execution, Mr. Raymond has a power of endearing his characters to the reader which many greater writers never achieve. He is blessed with a faculty for suggesting, with a wild sensuous sincerity, the apparently trivial steps in the relations between parents and children, lovers, and friends. The motion of his stories does not flag, and he is rarely boring. Irrelevant episodes have had to be used to fill up gaps in this sequel. We need never have heard the details of the death of Daphne's brother. Daphne herself continues to please, however much one may deplore her greedily sentimental attitude towards life. Her daughter provides the usual picture of the clear-headed, warm-hearted, post-war girl, and Mr. Raymond has clearly enjoyed drawing her, but how tired we are of the brilliant young things! The writing and publishing of novels is always tiresome in fiction, but Daphne's literary career at least introduces us to a fascinating glimpse of a young man whose novels were "philosophic, esoteric, and austere," an enviable mixture. It is also tiresome to find all those characters who are of literary temperament bursting out into nobly sentimental letters to one another. Indeed, one would not choose a literary temperament for oneself according to Mr. Raymond's recipe. And yet the book contains so many misplaced good points that one hopes his next will show more signs of that "inner discipline" which his heroine loved so much in theory.

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**The Daughter of the House.** By CAROLYN WELLS. (Lippincott, 7s. 6d.)

The inexplicable disappearance of Mary Lang upon her wedding day is solved by an old device, which here depends on the frustration of the maternal instinct in the woman who afterwards seemed to be Mary's best friend. The book is rather tiring to read, owing to the lack of any system of paragraphing, but the American English is lively, and carries its usual suggestion of candid good nature and moral purpose to an almost comic extent. The characters are very devoted to each other, and the mystery is well sustained, but it is a pity the famous detective is not more effective in personality.

## SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS COMPANY

The ordinary general meeting of the South Metropolitan Gas Company was held on February 24th, at the Cannon Street Hotel, E.C., Dr. Charles Carpenter, D.Sc., M.Inst.C.E. (the President), presiding.

The President, referring to the Government's Electricity proposals, said:—

In the first place, I want to endeavour to make clear to you what I understand the main proposal of the Government to be, for I cannot but think a good deal of misapprehension exists with regard to it. The subject is somewhat technical, so, to make it clearer, I will take an example from our railways. In the design and working of a railway system the following are three important points that have to be borne in mind—namely, the dimension of the track or running gauge, the dimension of the structure gauge—that is, the height and width of the tunnel and platforms, &c.—and, lastly, that of the loading gauge—that is the height and width of the coaches and other rolling stock. When railways were in the early stages of their development there was no uniformity on any of these points, and this continued until comparatively recent times. England in those days was not organized as a military country, but relied for defence almost wholly upon its insularity and its fleet. Fortunately, when the Great War broke out, as regards running gauge the defect of ununiformity had been corrected between the companies themselves in order to obtain the advantage of interchangeability and through running. In other words, the companies voluntarily carried out a change which to-day the Government would have no doubt insisted upon in the interests of national security by making the normal, or four feet eight and a-half, gauge a universal one. The importance of that achievement was that, with certain restrictions in respect of loading gauge, men and munitions could be transported on rolling stock that was usable throughout the length and breadth of the country served by the railway system.

Now, I must say a word about the generation of electric energy, in connection with which a good deal of misunderstanding appears to be present in the public mind. So that you may have this state of affairs. You may have electric undertakings all over the country generating and putting into their mains currents not necessarily of the fifty cycle alternating kind I have taken as an example, but of more or fewer cycles, of greater or lesser magnitude, or voltage, some continuous and others alternating.

Now, it is this state of things that I imagine the Government, guided by the Weir report, is seeking power to correct. The report is a secret one. I have not seen it, and I can only surmise some of its contents. To-day electric energy is being applied more and more extensively as the traction force upon our railway systems, generally where large numbers of persons have to be carried at one time and to and from their employment in our large cities. Indeed, for such purposes it is improbable that it will largely replace steam. What, then, is the object of coupling up with a so-called gridiron of cables all the electric systems of the country? I think one answer is supplied by reason of the ease with which even a large modern generating station can be put out of action. I could give you many instances gleaned from the published reports—they are, indeed, almost of weekly occurrence. For instance, during last month at the large power station in Liverpool a hole in the roof let in the rain and put the whole generating station out of action, stopping factories and tramways. A week later a generator exploded (if that is the correct expression), with similar results. Another case was at Warwick, where the power-house was flooded and all supplies stopped for several hours. During last year there were two or three dozen instances of failure, not in out-of-the-way places, but in our important cities. Glasgow's supply failed, not in that case through the rain coming in, but because a mouse got in the way. (Laughter.) Such troubles are usually productive of inconvenience and loss during times of peace, but you can easily picture how different this might be in a state of war. Viewed by an outsider—and I can claim no other point of view than such a one—I cannot imagine any other course lay before the Government than the one it has decided to adopt of standardizing all the electric generating and distributing systems throughout the country and coupling them up by some system of interlinking cables.

Whether a general cheapening of electric energy will result therefrom is another matter. I, personally, do not believe it will, for the larger proportion of electric energy costs is entailed not by generation, but by distribution. I think, too, that the effect upon industry of the new proposals has been greatly exaggerated.

May I, in passing, also remind you that in America, which is often pointed out to us as being ahead of us as regards electricity, the gas and electric undertakings are frequently under the same management. While it is not

easy to envisage a similar state of things being general over here, I believe greater economy would in the long run accrue if our outlying villages were encouraged to include a supply of electricity with that of gas, which in almost all cases is already supplied, instead of running many miles of unproductive cables.

Just one word in conclusion. The cases of the Port of London Authority and of the Metropolitan Water Board are suggested as examples of what the new Electric Authority is likely to be. Both are admirable examples of large scale undertakings, but whether the consumer has derived a proportionate advantage is a matter of opinion. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I feel that I can leave this part of my task and take up that portion with which you and I are both more conversant and more interested. Our chief by-product is coke, and this brought us in something like a quarter of a million pounds less than a year ago. So you see what a great influence by-products have upon the cost of coal.

Now, I want to say a few words as to our Act of last year, to the promotion of which you assented twelve months ago. Parliament has again shown its confidence in us by giving us an extension of what I prefer to call the charter of working it granted in 1920. Capital is now safeguarded as regards payment for its use, and in addition the whole undertaking and everyone concerned in the undertaking is encouraged to do his or her best to sell gas at the lowest possible price. It is in a low price for gas that our strength is founded, and stress cannot be laid upon that fundamental fact too strongly or too often. You will remember that by the Act we are entitled to divide our surplus of profit in the proportion of three-fourths to the consumer by way of reduction in the price of gas, and the other fourth equally between capital and labour. Your portion as shareholders is for last year an additional 1 per cent, plus £10,000 carried to reserve for future use or investment.

Now, there was another tendency made manifest in industry consequent upon the war—namely, the amalgamation of various undertakings into one huge concern and under one managing Board. I believe, as did the late Sir George Livesey, that although it is unquestionable that industrial operations may become uneconomical because of the small scale upon which they are worked, yet there is something like an optimum size which, if exceeded, may be equally uneconomical because of the very magnitude of its scale and the consequent difficulty not only of ensuring adequate management, but of securing and maintaining the interests of the whole body of employees. And yet there are obvious advantages pertaining to large-scale working. Our new Act has been drafted to enable these to be enjoyed by associating interests without thereby losing individuality on the part of either undertaking, or of good will of either personnel.

Let me give an example of how such an association I have described could be carried out. We would take over, say, one-half of the Ordinary stock of the associating company. In that way we should be deeply interested in its successful working, and any general raising of the level of prosperity resulting therefrom would be shared by the holders of the other half of this same stock. In consideration for the stock so taken over we would issue stock of an agreed equivalent value and denomination. The same Board of Directors and the same administration, the same general managers and officials would continue, and, not least important, the particular privileges of the employees which have grown up in one respect or another around each company as a nucleus would be maintained undisturbed and intact.

In conclusion, I should like to pay a tribute, none the less sincere because customary, to the satisfactory working of our co-partnership. There is nothing peculiar to the gas industry in the achievement of this result, and I am sure that with the will of masters and men co-partnership could be applied to coal mining if the attempt were seriously made. During the last strike no coal was raised in England for over three months, and it cost this company £350,000. Extend those figures over the whole community and it will be seen that no country, however prosperous once, could stand up to a continuance of such attacks upon it. Our own co-partnership has been established for well over a third of a century, but I believe that it is only now on the eve of demonstrating to the full all that can be achieved by it. Just as adversity tests friendship, so competition tests industry. This with us is growing keener day by day, and I believe your staff and employees will rise under its stimulus to a standard of efficiency not yet imagined in the industry with which it is associated, and that this company will continue to play its part in the economic development of gas supply during the present century as it so conspicuously succeeded in doing during the last.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

## FINANCIAL SECTION

### THE WEEK IN THE CITY

MONEY AND STOCKS IN GERMANY AND ITALY—BRAZILIAN AND BUDAPEST LOANS.

**E**ASY money and idleness on the Stock Exchange while trade is at any rate holding up, are not usually complementary; but forced liquidation in various speculative markets has generally unsettled and impeded business. Monetary and bourse conditions in Germany and Italy present also a strange contrast. In Germany market rates for short-term loans have fallen precipitately. Day-to-day money in Berlin is only 4½ per cent., although the discount rate of the Reichsbank remains at 8 per cent. Industry in Italy, on the other hand, is hampered by dear money, and joint-stock companies are suffering severely from the lack of working capital. Easy money in Germany follows, of course, upon the trade slump (of which over 2,000,000 unemployed are the visible sign), while dear money in Italy follows upon extraordinary industrial expansion. The Berlin bourse has lately been discounting a brighter future (there are, in fact, signs of definite trade improvement), but the Italian bourses have been pessimistic in the extreme. So much have Italian industrial stocks fallen that the Government reduced the rate of interest on "short" Treasury Bonds in a rather faint-hearted attempt to stimulate the industrial markets on the bourses. Snia Viscosa shares, for example, could be bought in Milan at 365 lira, although the report recently issued for 1925 shows a record of profits that should satisfy the most sanguine. The feature of the Italian situation, which is unsatisfactory from an international point of view, is the uncertainty of ratification by the American Senate of the debt agreement. If America now wants something in cash from Italy just because something (not much) was promised immediately in cash to Great Britain, she will impress Europe as being merely greedy. The United States can well afford to wait for the more favourable payments due to her in the later years.

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The foreign market remains firm, and we think that the upward movement in Brazilian stocks has official support. Brazil 5 per cent. 1913 at 68½ and 4 per cent. Rescission at 57½ may be mentioned as good investments of this group. Before further Brazilian borrowing is indulged in, the possibility of which we have suggested, it may be that the existing Brazilian stocks will be moved to higher levels. In the more speculative class of foreign securities, the City of Budapest loans deserve attention. There is some ground for believing that the City of Budapest cannot remain much longer without the help of a loan, and no doubt the City Council will feel obliged on that account to put its financial house in order. No interest is being paid on City of Budapest loans, but a provisional scheme for the funding of the arrears of interest was agreed upon in August, 1925, between representatives of the bondholders and of the Budapest City Council. The existing Budapest loans comprise the 4 per cent. sterling loan of 1910, the 4 per cent. French issue of 1912, and the 4½ per cent. international loan of 1914. This funding scheme, which awaits ratification, is as follows: (a) 1914-21, Arrears of Interest and Drawn Bonds.—These were governed by the Peace Treaty, and were eligible for claims through the Clearing House. (b) 1921 (July)—1925 (December). Arrears of Interest.—These will be discharged by a cash payment of £450,000 minimum, which will enable a cash payment of about 4 per cent. to be made. (c) 1926 (January)—1931 (January).—Interest is to be 75 per cent. of original rates (*i.e.*, 3 per cent. on 1910 and 1912 loans, and 3½ per cent. on 1914 loans). (d) After 1931 the interest will be in full. As a special guarantee, it is provided that a group of Swiss banks should be appointed trustees, and

should receive the total gross revenues of the municipal electricity concerns (light and power), and gas and water undertakings. These revenues are estimated for 1925 at 57,000,000 gold crowns (approximately £2,200,000). From 1926 to 1931 the sum of £262,193 is required for the service of the loans; from 1931 to 1934, £380,000, and from 1934 and subsequently (when the Sinking Funds will be resumed) an amount of £450,000 to £490,000 will be required. Thus the annual service of the loans will be covered approximately eight times up to 1931, and about five times thereafter. The present prices of the loans dealt in on the London Stock Exchange, together with the respective yields, are shown in the following table:—

Loan.	Amount.	Price.	Estimated cash payment to be made.	Flat yield 1926-31.	Flat yield 1931 onwards.	Redemption terms.
4½% 1910	£1,937,520	40½%	4%	£8 1 0	£10 14 10	1934-80*
4½% 1914 (British issue)	£960,200	44½%	4%	£8 3 5	£10 18 0	1934-84*
4½% 1914 (International issue)	£5,119,440	41½%	4%	£8 16 2	£11 15 2	1934-84*

\* Half-yearly drawings at par.

(The estimated cash payment, of 4% less tax, has been deducted from present prices in calculating flat yields.)

The 4 per cent. sterling loan of 1914 and the 4½ per cent. 1914 London issue are quoted in the Stock Exchange Official List, but the 4½ per cent. 1914 International issue, unofficially quoted, seems to enjoy the freest market.

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